

## DOCTORAL THESIS

### The Froebel Movement in Britain 1900–1939

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# **The Froebel Movement in Britain 1900-1939**

by

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*A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
PhD*

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## **Abstract**

This thesis analyses the development of the Froebel movement in Britain from 1900-1939, a critical period with challenges to Froebelian hegemony in early childhood education from new pedagogical models, organisations and disciplines, and from critiques of conservative orthodoxy. It argues that Froebelians were successful in meeting these challenges through pedagogic revision and through realignment of British Froebelians' focus on the kindergarten to encompass children in junior schools. The findings build on previous studies, providing an in-depth account which concludes that by 1939 Froebelians had a revitalised central organisational structure and a sound base for what had become a major national movement. The thesis claims that revisionist Froebelian pedagogy provided the foundation for practice in nursery, infant and junior schools, reflected in the recommendations of the Consultative Committee Reports of 1908, 1931 and 1933. These successes were driven by relationships formed by the Froebel Society, with organisations, notably the Nursery School Association, and with modernising officials in the Board of Education. The thesis argues that Froebelian women achieved some success in negotiating gendered power relations and presents biographical snapshots to show how ambitious career paths were pursued to advance Froebelian agendas. A qualitative approach was employed, drawing on interpretive frameworks from history, history of education, sociology, gender and cultural studies, with documentary analysis of private records from Froebelian organisations and the Nursery School Association, public records from the Board of Education and the London County Council and secondary published sources.

The thesis concludes that despite successes Froebelians were not able to overcome contemporary patriarchal discourse which granted low status to women's role as nursery and infant teachers and to the education of young children. Froebelians remained an élite and overwhelmingly chose careers in private schools, but nevertheless achieved some success in implementing Froebelian approaches in state nursery, infant and junior schools.

## **Prefatory note**

The author has previously published on themes which recur in this thesis, notably Froebelian women and networking; professionalization of kindergarten and infant school teaching and the dissemination of Froebelian pedagogy (Read 2000a; Read 2003; Read 2004c; Read and Walmsley 2006; Read 2006b; Read 2010a)

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## List of Abbreviations

British and Foreign School Society	BFSS
Conference of Educational Associations	CEA
Consultative Committee	CC
Child Study Society	CSS
Educational Handwork Association	EHA
*Froebel Educational Institute	FEI
Her/His Majesty's Inspectorate	HMI
Incorporated Association of Head Mistresses	IAHM
*Incorporated Froebel Educational Institute	IFEI
Local Education Authority/ies	LEA
London County Council	LCC
National Froebel Foundation	NFF
National Froebel Union	NFU
National Union of Teachers	NUT
Nursery School Association	NSA
National Union of Women Teachers	NUWT
National Union of Women Workers	NUWW
New Education Fellowship	NEF

\* Froebel Educational Institute was established in 1892. It registered as a company 'not for gain' under licence from the Board of Trade in 1900, becoming the Incorporated Froebel Educational Institute. The IFEI had oversight of the training college, FEI, and the Demonstration and Practising schools. In this thesis the acronym FEI has been used throughout for FEI and IFEI

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# Introduction

## 1. Introduction

This thesis analyses the development of the Froebel movement in Britain from 1900 to 1939; it investigates how Froebelians met the challenges which they faced and whether, and if so in what way, they contributed to developments in education for young children. The following five principal areas for investigation were identified and provided the framework for the research:

- How did Froebelians respond to insights deriving from the emergent disciplines of child psychology and psychoanalysis and to Montessori pedagogy?
  - How did Froebelian pedagogy develop?
  - How was it disseminated?
  - How was Froebelian pedagogy articulated in text-books and book reviews?
- What role did the Froebel movement play in the formulation and implementation of government policy?
  - What relationships did Froebelians form with key figures in administration?
  - What role did Froebelians play in HMI and Local Education Authority inspection?
  - Were Froebelians involved in Board of Education and London County Council policy discussion?
  - How were Froebelian views conveyed to the Consultative Committees of 1908 and 1933?
  - Did the Consultative Committees Reports reflect Froebelian pedagogy?



- What relationships did the Froebel Society develop with organisations with an interest in the education and care of young children?
  - What role, if any, did Froebelians play in the Nursery School Association [NSA]?
- How did Froebelian teacher-training develop at Froebel Educational Institute, London?
  - How did the curriculum develop?
  - How did the staff profile develop?
  - What career paths did FEI students take?
- What role did Froebelians play in the development of practice in infant and nursery schools?
  - Infant schools:
    - Did Froebelians introduce the Froebelian Gifts and Occupations into infant schools?
    - How did they adapt their practice to meet the demands of large classes and classroom structures?
    - What was the response of HMIs and LEA inspectors to their practice?
    - How did practice change from 1900 to 1939?
  - Nursery schools
    - What were the features of practice developed by Froebelians in nursery schools?
    - How was nursery school practice different from that in infant schools?

German educator Friedrich Froebel opened an institution for young children in the small rural Thuringian village of Blankenburg in 1837, inventing the name 'kindergarten' in 1840. Froebelian pedagogy derives from his writings: *The Education of Man* (1887, first published 1826), *Pedagogics of the Kindergarten* (1898, first published 1861), the *Mutter- und kose-Lieder* (1888, first published 1843), and *Letters on the Kindergarten* (1891, first published 1887). Froebel advocated children learning through self-initiated play activities and provided theoretical underpinning for play-based educational

practices. Froebel's ideas were introduced to Britain in the early 1850s and implemented principally in female-run, private, middle class kindergartens for children of three to six. The Froebel Society, representing kindergarten teachers and with a small number of male supporters, was established in London in November 1874 to promote Froebelian pedagogy; from 1887 the National Froebel Union [NFU] promoted the professional status of kindergarten teachers by establishing a common curriculum and standard for examinations for the Froebel Society Certificate (Read 2000a; Read 2003). The Froebel Society amalgamated with the NFU in 1938, becoming the National Froebel Foundation [NFF]. Today, over one hundred and thirty years after the formation of the Froebel Society, the NFF continues to advocate pedagogical practice grounded in Froebel's educational philosophy through a variety of strategies, including funded research. Thus, this is not a study of a casualty of history. It also represents a remarkable survival for a movement, with a formal organisation at its core, comprised overwhelmingly of women who were promoting the education of young children, albeit that male benefactors played a vital role in that survival.

The Introduction firstly reviews the historiography of the 'new' or 'progressive' education to establish the broader context for study of the Froebel movement from 1900 to 1939; it describes the terminology employed in the thesis to characterise education in this period and Froebelian developments in particular. It then discusses the themes which emerged in the course of the research: the professionalization of Froebelian teachers of young children, class, gender and status in policy formulation and the development of practice, and finally, the character of the Froebel movement in the twentieth century. The Introduction concludes with an explanation of the research process and organisation of the thesis.

The thesis covers a key period for creation of policy for nursery schools, for children from three to five, and innovation in infant and junior school teaching for children from five to eleven. Nursery, infant and junior schools were within the elementary sector and catered for children from working class families; children from wealthy families were taught within the home or in fee-paying kindergartens and private schools. In this period Froebelians faced challenges on a number of fronts. Rigid and mechanistic

practice by Froebelians in nineteenth century kindergartens had brought criticism of the pedagogy from within and beyond the movement. Froebelian principles were brought into question by developments in psychology emerging from the child study movement, by Freudian psychoanalytic insights which suggested new understanding of children's behaviour and by Montessori pedagogy. How Froebelians responded to these challenges, and used them as an opportunity to revisit and revision their pedagogy is a central focus for investigation in the thesis. Financial difficulties also hampered Froebel Society activities throughout the period, just as it constrained implementation of government policy.

At the beginning of the period, recognition that many working class homes were not capable of providing adequately for their young children, combined with criticism of existing provision in infant schools, led to proposals for nursery schools from women HMIs in their 1905 report on school attendance by children under five (Board of Education, 1905). These were repeated in the Board of Education Consultative Committee report in 1908 report on children under five in elementary schools (Board of Education, 1908), and by educationists, including Froebelian, such as Margaret McMillan, and organisations for working women. Debate amongst politicians in central government and in local educational authorities, such as the London County Council [LCC], regarding provision of nursery schools reflected long-standing concerns of Froebelians. They had lobbied the government for changes to infant school teaching following the formation of the Froebel Society in 1874; from 1900 they addressed the issue by opening free kindergartens for poor children. The thesis argues that Froebelians were active contributors to policy on young children's education, as members of the Froebel organisations and as members of the wider Froebel movement. Further, Froebel-trained teachers, and those who advocated Froebelian pedagogy, introduced significant changes in their schools; the thesis focuses on practice in London which attracted visitors from across Britain and overseas. As the Froebel movement developed a stronger national profile, developments discussed in the thesis had implications across Britain and brief reference is made to these.

The thesis ends in 1939 with the onset of World War Two which established a new set of educational and welfare priorities. Continuing widespread concern about lack of provision for poor children fuelled

ongoing debate and pressure for statutory provision, from individuals and from educational, political and welfare organisations; in the debates surrounding nursery schools versus nursery classes cost, rather than quality, was a prime consideration. This might be seen as a failure for Froebelians; however, by 1939 their argument for the benefits of kindergarten education was reflected in the proposal for nursery schools for all children, not simply those from what contemporary discourse framed as inadequate homes. This view was supported by child psychoanalysts, such as Susan Isaacs, and those interested in education more generally, such as Bertrand Russell. The Froebelian argument for reconfiguration of practice in infant schools had been made by the Board's Consultative Committee in 1933 (Board of Education, 1933) which made a strong affirmation of Froebelian approaches, as had its earlier report on primary schools, in 1931 (Board of Education 1931).

The thesis concludes that by 1939 Froebelians had met the challenges they faced and had achieved a sound basis to continue advocacy of Froebelian pedagogy for children in nursery, infant and junior schools; administrative structures had been effectively re-shaped; Froebelian pedagogy had been re-articulated and its central tenets aligned with new concepts, and the Froebel movement had a broad base of support amongst teachers and other professionals working with young children. The thesis attempts a rigorous, analytical and comprehensive study which focuses on the Froebel movement in Britain in a period which merits close investigation; such a study has not yet been published.

## **1.1 The chimera of influence**

Rather than attempting to measure Froebel's 'influence', the thesis identifies commonalities with Froebel's prescriptions in articulations of policy and practice, as recommended in government reports, advocated by HMIs and LCC Inspectors and implemented by teachers in nursery, infant and junior schools. In this respect, it draws on the argument of historian Quentin Skinner. that measuring 'influence' is a chimera; decisions, actions and procedures derive from and refer to specific events emerging from particular sets of historical circumstances (Skinner 1969, rev. 2002). Brehony (1987) concurs with Skinner's view and concludes that the 'influence [of the Froebel movement] was too often indistinguishable from that of other forces and other determinants which bore upon educational policy

and practice (Brehony 1987, p.663). Nonetheless, Froebel proposed a distinctive pedagogy for young children which referred to learning environments (the kindergarten and a variety of outdoor spaces), materials (the Gifts and Occupations), staff (qualities and responsibilities), and parental roles.

## **1.2 Exciting times: experiment and progressivism in English education 1900 to 1939**

### **1.2.1 The historiography of the 'New' education**

The period from 1900 to 1939 was testing and exciting for Froebelians, in equal measure. The second decade of the century was characterised by a buoyancy and spirit of open debate amongst educational organisations, evident in the conferences held at the University of London from 1914 organised by the Conference of Educational Associations. From the 1890s educational discourse was increasingly couched in terminology of experiment and science (Hofstetter and Scheuwly 2006), drawing on the procedures and writings of America's child study theorists; notable amongst these was G. Stanley Hall, whose attempts to establish norms of child development entailed close observation of children. Brehony (2009a, p.585) characterises child study theory as 'the empirical assault on Froebelian rationalism'. Akin to the displacement of midwives by trained male doctors, it can be seen as a gendered assault by the male academy to usurp untrained female expertise. In 1910, the newly launched *Times Educational Supplement* referred to England as 'an educational laboratory' (6th September, cited in Cunningham 2000, p.218). Educational experiments with school government, co-education and teaching approaches, were taking in place in private schools (Woods 1920). Froebelians such as Frances Roe and E.R. Boyce described their infant school work as 'educational experiments' (Roe 1933; Boyce 1938). Policy discourse surrounding nursery education stressed its experimental nature (Fisher 1918) and reference was made to the carrying out of practical experiments (LCC. Education Committee, 9th/10th July 1934). Maria Montessori, Italian doctor and educationist, propounded the scientific claims of her pedagogical method for educating young children (Montessori 1912). Concern to conceptualise education as a science predated the child study theorists (Selleck

1967) and origins of the 'new' education were claimed by Emily Shirreff for Froebel as early as 1877 (Shirreff 1877; Brehony 2001).

Froebel's contribution has been contextualised more broadly within the 'new' education (Boyd 1930; Boyd and Rawson 1965; Selleck 1968); these discussions illuminate the imprecise nature of terminology, a criticism which also applies to 'progressive', 'progressivism', 'child-centred' and 'activity school'. Contemporary discussions of the 'new' education, in the pages of *New Era*, the journal of the New Education Fellowship, for example, and in current historiography of the progressive movement, indicate the diversity of views encompassed within it; ultimately, lack of a clear conceptual framework problematises use of these terms, as noted by Lynch (1936) and Brehony (2001).

Australian writer R.J.W. Selleck has written widely on the 'new' education (1967; 1968), including on the introduction of progressive methods into English primary education which is of particular relevance for this thesis (1972). His account of key literature in this book provided one source for the identification of texts for analysis in Chapter Eight. Selleck locates the origins of the 'new' education, a 'movement for educational reform' (Selleck 1968, p.vii), in the late nineteenth century and suggest its effects were still being felt at the time of the book's publication. According to Selleck the movement was 'confused and complex' (p.viii). Of crucial importance here is his delineation of the 'naturalist' tendency, the chief representatives being Pestalozzi and Froebel, (Margaret McMillan, Maria Montessori, Joseph John Findlay and John Dewey are the most notable of others discussed). In this book Selleck avoids the term 'progressive'; in his later book on progressives in English primary education (1972) he argues that a 'progressive' view of education subsequently evolved from the welter of 'New Education' tendencies early in the twentieth century with the specific onset of progressivism in 1911: 'if a time has to be set for the beginning of progressivism in England, May 1911... is probably the best date' (1972, p.26). In that year, former Chief Inspector Edmond Holmes' seminal text *What Is and What Might Be* (1911), was published, offering a powerful criticism of practice in the elementary schools. Whether Selleck is correct in his chronology of terminology is uncertain, the term 'progressivism' being associated with former Institute of Education Director Geoff Whitty's work in

the 1960s; this merely highlights the dilemma of imprecision. Selleck's analysis of the features of the 'new' education which most strongly influenced the progressives highlights the central role of those concepts deriving from the naturalists: 'the stress on 'freedom', 'individuality' and 'growth', the concern with 'interest' and 'learning by doing', the belief in the passivity of the teacher and the sanctity of the child were shared by both groups' (i.e. the followers of Pestalozzi and Froebel) (Selleck 1968; Selleck 1972). This account is hardly unproblematic – Froebelians would dispute construction of the kindergarten teacher's role as a 'passive teacher', which was not justified with reference to Froebel's own writing, although central to Montessori's view of the Directress. However, the general burden of Selleck's argument supports the interpretation adopted in this thesis, that Froebelian concepts (with certain specific curricular activities and learning materials) were central to the infrastructure of 'progressive' pedagogy, and that there were many within and beyond the Froebel Society who were actively engaged in promoting those concepts and practices.

### **1.2.2 The historiography of the Froebel movement**

The thesis builds on previously published (Smart 1982; Liebschner 1991; Brehony 1998; Brehony 2000a; Brehony 2004a; Nawrotzki 2006; Nawrotzki 2007; Nawrotzki 2009; Brehony 2009a) and unpublished research on the history of the Froebel movement and Froebel training (Lilley 1963; Collins 1984; Brehony 1987; Nawrotzki 2005; Smart 2006). This body of work covers different time-spans and geographical dimensions. The most ambitious, in terms of scope, is Nawrotzki's thesis, which attempts a survey from 1850 to 1965 of both the English and American movements. Other literature has looked at particular aspects of the Froebel movement. Cunningham (2001) discusses Froebelian networking activities in his study of prosopography, or collective biography, which he suggests as a tool for understanding of progressivism. This has provided a helpful perspective for this research, underpinning the use of fragments of biographical narratives which illustrate Froebelian agency. Brehony has published widely, on the adoption of Sloyd, a Swedish system of handwork, by some English Froebelians (Brehony 1998); on the Pestalozzi-House, the Berlin institution developed by Froebel's great-niece, Henriette Schrader-Breymann which, he argues, provided a model for the nursery school

(Brehony 2004a), and on the impact of Dewey's ideas on English education (Brehony 1997). This thesis builds in particular on Brehony's work, and on his discussion of key figures in the English revisionist process (Brehony 2000a). The findings presented in Nawrotzki's study of the National Froebel Foundation are challenged here as unduly negative (Nawrotzki 2006), however, her account of the transatlantic crossings of Froebelian pedagogy, which shows how interpretations reflect particular local conditions, is a helpful perspective which is only partially addressed in this thesis, where the focus is on developments in the U.K. (Nawrotzki 2009). One aspect of the transatlantic crossings which this thesis addresses is the impact of child study and Dewey on the re-visioning of Froebelian pedagogy (Brehony 1997; Nawrotzki 2005), particularly how it shaped practice in schools and was articulated in textbooks. The rich global dimension of the movement is the focus of Wollons' edited volume which has chapters on England, Germany, America, Australia, China, Vietnam, Japan, Poland, Russia, and the Turkish Ottoman empire and, more generally, on Jewish education (Wollons 2000).

### **1.2.3 The terminology of revision**

In this thesis the term 'revisionist' has been employed to describe how Froebelian kindergarten pedagogy developed from 1900 to 1939, following Brehony (2000). In places a variant of this term, 're-visioning', has been used to capture the approach taken by Froebelians to their task.

## **2. Themes**

### **2.1 Professionalization**

A central theme of this thesis, representing contemporary concerns which Froebelians shared and sought to address, is discussion of efforts to enhance the professional status of infant teachers, who remained largely untrained in the early part of the period (Partington 1976). In this respect, Froebelian efforts accompanied those of teacher unions, notably the National Union of Women Teachers. The



thesis argues that Froebel Society activities, particularly its classes for teachers, summer schools and branch activity, some in conjunction with other organisations, played an important role in developing infant teachers' expertise and broadening conceptions of professional knowledge. Unlike courses for the government Teacher's Certificate, the National Froebel Union [NFU] offered three-year training. Colleges such as Froebel Educational Institute [FEI] were also pushing for recognition, from the University of London and from the Board of Education. In 1920 FEI achieved recognition from the Board; subsequently, FEI students were eligible for grant in their second and third years of study and internal examination papers were set from 1921, in conjunction with NFU appointed examiners (Anon 1922). At FEI, Esther Lawrence urged members of the alumni organisation, the Michaelis Guild, to join the Teachers' Registration Society, which required three years training and the achievement of the NFU Certificate (Lawrence 1919). The thesis shows that despite significant statements of acceptance that nursery teachers required certificated status, for example by the Consultative Committee in 1908, contested notions of qualities required for nursery school teaching persisted (Wise 1932). Government memoranda were ambivalent on what was deemed appropriate. A memo to inspectors regarding inspection of nursery schools referred to the requirement 'as a rule' for a certificated teacher but continued: 'personal qualities are, however, almost as important as professional training'; desirable qualities were a calm manner, quiet speech, cheerfulness and, tact, with the ability to win the confidence of parents (Board of Education, 1936). The thesis argues that some Froebelians contributed to conceptions which embodied low status.

## **2.2 Class, gender and status: policy formulation and the development of practice**

The thesis illuminates how a complex set of power relations embodying issues of gender and class played a role in Board of Education discussion and development of policy, in ways that were not straightforward or transparent. Evidence of how Froebelian women experienced these relations has not emerged in the direct way expressed by Henriette Schrader Breymann in 1848. Breymann reported a jibe made by a male delegate at the Rudolstadt teachers' conference concerning Froebel's assignation of a moral role to women in the kindergarten: "I must say I shudder at philosophical women" (Lyschinska n.d., unpaginated); she recorded her reaction: '[m]y heart beat loud enough to be

heard; I would have liked to express my indignation with the men who, as I could feel, regarded us as inferior beings...I wanted to go to the men speakers and tell them what I am writing to you, but I could not induce myself to speak in public' (ibid). Froebelian women in Britain in the period from 1900 to 1930 may not have experienced such overt jibes or felt so disinclined to speak out; in contrast, the thesis discusses how Katherine Bathurst did so very publicly. Regardless, the thesis argues that the middle-class composition of the Froebel movement provided its female members with status, or as Bourdieu puts it, *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990), which served as a significant factor as it pursued its aims and objectives.

In interrogating these issues the thesis contributes to the body of literature focusing on women's participation in educational decision-making and as shapers of practice (Zimmeck 1987; Kean 1990; Oram 1996; Martin 1999; Goodman 2000; Goodman and Harrop 2000; Harrop 2000; Hilton 2000; Martin 2004). It challenges studies where male hegemony emerges from the absence of women players (Boyd 1965; Simon 1965; Selleck 1968; Selleck 1972; Simon 1974), arguing that more nuanced interpretations of how prescription translated into practice can reveal positive outcomes from female agency. Biographical narratives of a number of key women from across the spectrum of activity underpin this argument.

### **3. The Froebel movement in the twentieth century - A Froebel movement?**

What this thesis describes as the Froebel movement comprised the Froebel Society and its members; local branches, affiliated to the central Society, and their members; the National Froebel Union; Froebelian training colleges, and those who promoted Froebel's ideology but outside the formal organisations. It thus meets Brehony's (1987) definition of movements in education as 'people who come together for the attainment of a specific purpose which relates to education or schooling' (1987: 3); he identifies 'the presence of a formal organisation at its core' as 'a principal defining characteristic'

(1987: 4). The definition adopted in this thesis concurs with this definition but amplifies it in line with reference to social movement literature.

Froebelians used two terms to describe the movement: kindergarten and Froebel or Froebelian. Joseph John Findlay, Froebel Society Council member, used the term 'kindergarten movement' at the Society's Annual Meeting in March 1895; proposing thanks to the Chairman, George Hamilton, Findlay expressed his concern that a perception of kindergarten as an introduction solely to manual training was developing and that 'there was a real danger and a real likelihood that the Kindergarten movement might develop into something which was purely mechanical' (Froebel Society, 1896, p.11). This term was also used by Maude May in her account of provision for young children in Germany and Switzerland in the 1908 Consultative Committee Report. Presenting a history of the kindergarten, she noted that after the founding of the kindergarten and the first training college for kindergarten teachers in Prussia '[t]he movement soon spread, some sixteen or eighteen other Kindergartens being opened in Froebel's lifetime' (Board of Education, 1908 p.209). Writing half way through the period of the research, key Froebelian Alice Woods (1920) included 'the modern Froebelian movement' as one of a number of educational experiments. The term 'Froebel movement' is adopted in this thesis as more appropriate for the widening focus of interest and activity of Froebelian organisations in the twentieth century.

### **3.1 The Froebel movement as cult or sect**

Conceptions of the Froebel movement as a cult or sect were made contemporaneously by Findlay (Findlay 1921) and Thomas Raymont (1928), a view developed more recently by Brehony (1987) who makes connections with Weberian sociology of religion (Weber 1978). Raymont wrote in 1928 that early Froebelians 'naturally tended to make a holy mystery of their master's doctrine' (1928, p.287). Language used by Froebelians support this conception. The American Froebelian Lucy Wheelock led a 'Froebel Pilgrimage' (Froebel Society. Minutes X, 20<sup>th</sup> October.1910; 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> March 1911). Use of such language persisted; in 1929 Murray articulated her 'gospel of play' (Murray 1929) and over twenty years later Eglantyne Jebb wrote that Baroness Bertha von Marenholtz-Bülów, one of Froebel's

'own early disciples' (p.5), inspired Julie Salis Schwabe with 'missionary zeal' (Jebb 1952). Not all contemporaries took the view that orthodoxies were fixed, instead emphasising the protean nature of the Froebel movement. In 1921 Findlay wrote to the Society:

in retaining his name as a bond of union between teachers of the young, you are not maintaining the shibboleths of one isolated teacher, or adhering to a closed system labelled with the pedantries of a sect: you are proclaiming your faith in the study of childhood after the example of a great apostle (Findlay 1921, p.298).

At the Society's 1918 summer school H.A.L. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, described the Society as follows:

it is not enslaved by any one formal set of doctrines, or by the intellectual legacy of any one teacher. The Froebel Society is a society which lives to learn. It is always learning. It is alive to all the best movements and all the newest ideas in connexion with the teaching of very young children (Fisher 1918, p.66).

A review in the *School Government Chronicle* of the Society's Jubilee Pamphlet in 1925 combined the conception of Froebelians as a 'cult' with fluidity of ideas; it described the 'essential mobility of the Froebel cult...Froebelism [sic] is not a system nor a method but a principle or a growing structure of ideas...' (Anon 1925b). Selleck makes a similar point about progressives which, the thesis argues, is applicable to Froebelians in this period : '[I]ike all missionaries the progressives found that in converting the world they transformed themselves' (1972, p.128).

The thesis shows how developing Froebelian orthodoxies were disseminated through publications, classes for teachers and, in particular, through summer schools, where attendees met leaders (Murray, Brown Smith, Roe, amongst others); were introduced to key practices (for example the project method) and central tenets (activity learning deriving from children's interests); learnt who could join (not Montessorians or anyone wedded to mechanical procedures with the Gifts), and achieved fellowship [sic] (Anon 1930b) and identity through prolonged immersion in social and intellectual pursuits.

## **4. Research design**

### **4.1 The research process**

Evidence was sought in the following archive collections: Board of Education records in the National Archive pertaining to nursery school policy, HMIs, and the Consultative Committee; LCC records in the London Metropolitan Archive pertaining to nursery school policy and inspection of, and practice in, infant schools; the private archives of the Froebel Society, NFU, FEI, Notting Hill and Somers Town Nursery Schools, held in the Froebel Archive for Childhood Studies, Roehampton University, and the NSA, in the British Library of Political and Economic Science. Also examined were the archives of child study organisations, principally the Child Study Society, held in the British Psychological Society (since transferred to the Wellcome Institute).

### **4.2 Organisation of the thesis**

#### **Chapter One The Research Process: Methodologies and Interpretive Frameworks**

Chapter One discusses the research methodologies and analytical frameworks which were employed. It starts out with discussion of the paradigms and approaches relevant for historical research and then describes the methodologies and principal analytical tools which were employed.

#### **Chapter Two The Froebel Organisations: Developing and Disseminating Froebelian Pedagogy and Identity**

Chapter Two sets the scene by looking at two key areas. Firstly, it discusses strategies employed by the Froebel Society to disseminate developing conceptions of Froebelian pedagogy. Secondly, it describes how the NFU developed its curriculum and new qualifications to incorporate new ideas and to meet changes in educational structures and practice. The chapter demonstrates how Froebelians contributed to the professionalization of teachers of young children in private and state schools through these activities.

#### **Chapter Three Froebelians, Policy-making and Implementation: Administrative Structures**

Chapter Three is the first of two chapters investigating the role played by Froebelians in policy

development. It focuses on how Froebelians promoted relationships with three key government officials and with two women MPs and on the role played by Froebelians as HMIs and inspectors for the LCC. The chapter concludes that Froebelian attempts to shape policy through relationships were only partially achieved; employment as HMIs and Inspectors provided Froebelians with opportunities to shape practice in schools and training colleges but women Inspectors were constrained by gendered organisational structures.

#### **Chapter Four Froebelians, Policy-Making and Implementation: The Consultative Committee**

Chapter Four focuses on Froebelian contributions to the Consultative Committee investigations of 1908, on children under five in elementary schools, and 1933, on nursery and infant schools. It also comments on recommendations in the Consultative Committee's 1931 report on primary schools. The chapter concludes that Froebelian pedagogy was strongly represented in 1908 and 1933, in the latter alongside elements of Montessori pedagogy. The chapter considers criticism of the ineffectiveness of the Consultative Committee but concludes that despite limited practical outcomes their reports made an important contribution to discussion of all aspects of nursery and infant school teaching.

#### **Chapter Five The Froebel Society and other organisations**

Chapter Five investigates relationships which the Froebel Society developed with organisations; it discusses the NSA in depth and draws also on evidence from the Child Study Society. The chapter explores how individual members played a role in pursuing particular agendas and draws on social movement theory to interrogate the dynamics of organisational relationships.

#### **Chapter Six Training Froebelian Teachers: the Froebel Educational Institute**

Chapter Six analyses developments in Froebel training through a study of a Froebel training college, the Froebel Educational Institute. The chapter concludes that the curriculum developed to reflect revisionist Froebelian pedagogy but that students did not take advantage of widening career paths; instead they overwhelmingly took up posts in private schools. As a result opportunities for wider

dissemination of Froebelian pedagogy remained only partially fulfilled. The chapter also concludes that students valued their training highly, and the strong identity which it gave them.

### **Chapter Seven Froebelian Pedagogy in Infant and Nursery Schools**

Chapter Seven focuses on how Froebelian pedagogy was implemented in infant and nursery schools in London. The chapter's analysis of practice in the selected infant schools shows that teachers were implementing revisionist Froebel pedagogy and increasingly focused on activities derived from children's interests as a means to learning core curriculum subjects. In the nursery schools the focus was on play and on establishing routines of health and cleanliness, in association with work with parents. The chapter concludes that central to practice in the nursery schools was the pursuit of a civilising agenda which addressed the contemporary discourse of racial decline.

### **Chapter Eight Re-visioning Froebelian Pedagogy: Articulations 1900 to 1939**

In this chapter the focus is on how Froebelians drew on insights from child study and, in particular, psychoanalysis, in revising their pedagogy. The chapter finds that Froebelians enthusiastically engaged with new ideas and viewed them as offering a fresh perspective on essential tenets, and that this was evident in articulations of their pedagogy, notably in terminology, textbooks for teachers and reviews of new literature.

## **5. Conclusion**

The topic of this thesis was chosen in order to investigate how the Froebel movement in Britain, which had pioneered an innovative early childhood pedagogy in the nineteenth century, responded to the new intellectual climate of the twentieth century and to criticisms that its underpinning theories were outdated and its practices rigid and formulaic. The years from 1900 to 1939 were a rich period for new educational theories and practices and for the establishment of new organisations which promoted them. The development of child psychology, particularly emerging from the Child Study movement in

the U.S., and of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, taken forward by his daughter Anna Freud, Melanie Klein and Susan Isaacs, fed into infant teachers' understandings of their pupils' development and factors affecting their learning. Froebelian pedagogy was set down some seventy years before these ideas began to take root. As revisionist pedagogy took shape it raised questions about the maintenance of a distinctive Froebelian identity, and how that identity was inculcated. I also wanted to find out what strategies Froebelians employed to convey their educational vision to teachers and to policy-makers at a time of structural change in British education, with the introduction of nursery schools in 1918 and the combining of infant and junior departments in primary schools, all in a period of financial stringency. As Froebelians were overwhelmingly women, the question arose as to whether they were able to successfully negotiate gendered power structures as they pursued their agenda to disseminate Froebelian pedagogy more widely. The topic also required investigation of how Froebel training developed and whether Froebel-trained students pursued career paths outside the private schools which were their traditional home. Finally, given the pace of change in these thirty-nine years, the topic demanded an analysis of how Froebelian pedagogy was articulated in the final decade of the period. The investigation is of specific interest, given the continuance of the Froebel movement today, but also more generally as a case study of organisational change.



## Chapter One

### The Research Process: Methodologies and Interpretive Frameworks

#### 1. Introduction

This study of the Froebel movement crosses disciplinary boundaries to draw on methodological and interpretive perspectives from history (Elton 1967; Kitson Clark 1967; Burke 2001; Marwick 2001; Roberts 2001; Spiegel 2005; Tosh 2009a; Tosh 2009b; Gardner 2010), history of education (McCulloch & Richardson 2000; McCulloch & Watts 2003), sociology, including social movement perspectives (Hammersley 1993; Morley and Chen 1996; McKenzie, Powell and Usher 1997; May 2001; Diani 2003), gender studies (Purvis 1985; Scott 1988; Butler 1990; Scott 1992; Maynard 1994; Smith 1998; Maynard and Purvis 1999; Canning 2006) and cultural studies (Johnson 2004). Such an approach might be the *zeitgeist* in research; arguably, it frees the researcher to think outside constraints imposed by particular disciplinary paradigms (Krishnan 2009). Here, it was demanded by breadth of topic. At the root of recent debate about use of theory by Philip Gardner (2010) and U.S. educational historians in the *History of Education Quarterly* (May 2011) is the requirement for historians to reflect on possible research methodologies and theoretical frameworks, and to read recent theory with an eye to older, equally helpful, conceptualisations; this chapter shows how this requirement has been addressed in this thesis. A multi-layered interpretive approach is employed, focusing on individual and combined Froebelian agency in promoting their pedagogy, in face of structural conditions which enabled and constrained (Mills 1959; Giddens 1984; May 2001). This approach is firmly situated within a qualitative paradigm and grounded in the view that historical understanding requires knowledge of the specific intellectual and cultural contexts within which new ways of thinking can be conceived (Kuhn 1970). The analysis grapples with validity and objectivity in historical representation, which are at the heart of concerns about the nature of qualitative social inquiry (Edson 1986; Guba & Lincoln 1994; McKenzie 1997; Bryant 2000; Hodder 2000; Southgate 2000; Pring 2004).

Joseph Bryant's vigorous defence of historical social science, in response to critiques from positivists and postmodernists, was helpful in confirming the validity of the approach adopted here (Bryant 2000). He rejects claims that lacunae in available data and 'interpretive anarchy' fail to provide a secure foundation for theory-building and testing (Bryant, op.cit., p.389). Instead, he argues that the historian is a 'critical realist...operating in a dialogical or interrogative relationship to the records and remains from the past' assessing and synthesising available materials (p. 492). In line with Bryant's view that incomplete data and differential interpretation can 'create opportunities for speculative interpolations and hypothetical inferences' (p.493), the aim is to provide a persuasive interpretation solidly grounded in empirical data.

Meaning is not out there awaiting discovery; it is produced in the dialogic engagement of researcher with historical data, in this case derived from the Froebelian 'texts, institutions, practices and forms of life' (Bernstein, 1983 p.135, cited in Schwandt, 2000, p.194). Following French philosopher Paul Ricoeur's conception of 'text' as encompassing human activity as well as written records (Odman 1988), discussion of documentary evidence is contextualised within the framework of relationships between and among Froebelians, with organisations and political structures, and in their activity as inspectors, committee members and witnesses, teachers, students, lecturers and college principals.

Feminist concern to excavate the lives of women not represented in the bulk of male-authored educational historiography is a driving motivation for this research, as it has driven others (Purvis 1992; Weiner 1994; Weiler and Middleton 1999; Theobald 2000; Goodman 2003; Martin 2003; Martin and Goodman 2004; Martin 2007). This applies not only to grand narrative; Selleck's study of progressive forces in primary education up to 1939 refers to few of the women discussed in this thesis (Selleck 1972). Personal preconceptions that pursuit of an ideal of education for young children would overcome individual motivations, class differences and political persuasion in a co-operative project, were challenged by the data, leading to a more nuanced understanding of human action and interaction. In his review of interpretivism, hermeneutics and social constructionism Thomas Schwandt (2000) argues that in interpretive traditions, the interpreter 'objectifies (i.e., stands over and against)

that which is to be interpreted', adopting a non-reflexive stance (p.194). The view that the researcher's accumulated baggage of beliefs can simply be set aside is not realistic; I concur with Gadamer's contrasting view of interpretation as an act of understanding which draws on our 'traditions and associated prejudgements' (ibid) as we engage in a 'dialogical encounter with what is not understood' (Bernstein, cited in Schwandt, op. cit., p.195). Nor is it inevitable that personal biases are reproduced in the understanding that is achieved.

A related motivation was investigation of historical gendered power relations and status. As a lecturer in Early Childhood Studies the continuing predominance of women in the early years workforce and the low status of work with young children is constantly before me. It is evident, too, in job titles: nanny, childminder and nursery nurse; the more recent designation, Early Years Professional Status, indicates the ongoing effort to assert professional identity for this group, at least for those with a degree and additional training and experience. In considering how far to explicitly link past and present experiences, cultural studies theory provided a helpful perspective, that a 'past-present-future continuum is most active within history-writing with an emancipatory impulse such as feminist history' (Johnson, Chambers, Raghuram and Tincknell 2004, p.122). Whilst recognising the positioning of the historian in an 'unending dialogue between the present and the past' (Carr, cited in Edson, op.cit., p.16), and the significance of historical understanding for active citizenship today (Tosh 2008), the primary concern of this thesis is understanding the historical context for the development of the Froebel movement; no attempt is made to emulate the 'archaeological imagination' of Raymond Williams, in pursuing history not for its own sake but as it informs current and future debate (Raphael Samuel, cited in Johnson et al. op.cit., p.122).

## **2. Documentary Analysis**

Investigating the role of Froebelians in development of policy and practice required empirical research using published and unpublished primary and secondary documents emanating from central and local

government and archives of private organisations. Triangulation of data from these sources underpinned the research; with documentary analysis, it comprised the central methodology.

Online catalogues were most helpful in locating documents, enabling time spent in archives to be used for reading rather than searching. These were available for the National Archives and Nursery School Association; searching in the London Metropolitan Archive was a time-consuming process of looking through bound paper catalogues. For the archives of the Froebel Society and National Froebel Union [NFU], Froebel Educational Institute [FEI] and Michaelis Free Kindergarten and Somers Town Nursery School, unpublished outline lists are available in the Froebel Archive section of Roehampton University's Archives and Special Collections. Previous work in the Archive proved helpful in identifying relevant documents, given the lack of detail in the lists.

## **2.1 Historical consciousness and context**

Archival research requires attention to authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning in assessment of documents (Platt 1981a; Scott 1990; Jupp 1993; McCulloch 2004); in the chapters which follow this applied also to analysis of documents selected for inclusion. Choice, grounded in assessment of relevance and significance, highlighted particular data and established boundaries to the story told here (Platt 1981b). This applied to major excisions and lesser instances (for example, some schools and individuals rather than others, particular papers in a file). As noted previously, the intention is to provide a nuanced interpretive account grounded in rich and appropriately selected primary source material (Andrew 1985; McCulloch and Richardson 2000; McCulloch 2004) which claims credibility rather than truth. An example of the interpretive stance is discussion of how the women who were the principal advocates for Froebelian pedagogy from 1900 to 1939 negotiated power relations shaped by gender and class; the aim was to establish whether rigid regulatory control was experienced as incontrovertibly oppressive. An interpretive stance has been helpful in two respects. As an approach underpinning critical textual analysis, it provided insight into the role played by language and discourse in structuring such relations (Foucault 1977; Macherey 1978; Kenway 1995); it proved particularly fruitful in reading Board of Education memoranda. Secondly, a central

concern has been to pay close attention to complex personal, social, political and historical relationships between individuals, between organisations and between these and national and local government (McCulloch 2004). Froebelians needed to successfully negotiate these relationships to survive in a period which presented many challenges, most significantly financial (internal to the Froebel Society and affecting what could be achieved in schools) and pedagogical. Investigating relationships entailed clarification of authorship of documents, intended audience, context, nature of influence sought and processes involved in production (McCulloch and Richardson 2000). A significant example concerned merger discussions between organisations, the Froebel Society and NSA in particular. Understanding these issues required historical consciousness and appreciation of contextuality, which a hermeneutical stance fosters (Gadamer 1989; Ricoeur 1991). This was relevant, too, for informed reading of policy documents, for example relating to welfare legislation in the first decade of the period, and to nursery schools throughout the period. Unease about state intervention in the family was evident in contemporary discussion, showing the potential for policy to arouse debate across party divides and between different interest groups (Simon 1965; Thane 1991; Harris 1992; Brehony 2009c). This was evident in the conflicting views presented to the Consultative Committee in 1908 regarding school attendance by children under five. Codd suggests that analysing policy documents can identify 'the real conflicts of interest within the social world which they claim to represent' (Codd 1988, p.246).

## **2.2 Public records: gender, status and significance**

Codd's point applied also to debate amongst Froebelians, teacher unions and officials in the Board of Education and London County Council [LCC] the status of work with young children as nursery school policy developed. However, weeding of documents by archivists, but also by government officials, to ensure retention of historically significant records, might reflect gendered views of what comprised 'significance', and thereby mask women's agency. Interestingly, files relating to nursery schools survived, stamped 'HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS NOT TO BE DESTROYED' [sic]; who made this decision is not recorded. Conflation of 'nursery' and 'motherly' in documents by Board of Education

and LCC officials served to undermine attempts by Froebelians and teacher unions to promote the professional nature of the work. However, this was complicated by the Froebelians' own advocacy of motherliness as a component of the professional role, demonstrating the need to consider the context in which the term was used.

The major central government files scrutinised related to the women inspectors' report (Board of Education, 1905), Consultative Committee Reports (Board of Education, 1908; Board of Education, 1933), Office files on nursery schools for 1917 (Board of Education, 1917), and subsequent papers up to 1939. Differing quantities of records were found. No correspondence from the Board's five women inspectors was located for the 1905 report; instead, the report presented their evidence. No surviving memoranda of witness evidence to the 1908 Consultative Committee have been found. The report drew substantially on this evidence and named the witnesses; no gendered distinctions appeared to be made in presenting male and female evidence in the report and its conclusions. Research has shown how complex power interactions in the giving and taking of evidence by women witnesses, with varying degrees of political shrewdness and confidence, by committee members with different agendas, could lead to marginalisation and control of 'voice' (Goodman 1997; O'Hanlon-Dunn 2000). Full transcripts of witness evidence were retained for the 1933 Consultative Committee report, providing a rich record of contributions from invitees from across the educational spectrum, with significant data representing Froebelian pedagogy. What was not retained was evidence sent by many individuals, the majority of them women, and organisations, thus the records for the Committee cannot be regarded as complete.

In order to trace Froebelian involvement, as witnesses or deputations, in development of policy, and in articulation of official discourse, I looked at files which contain internal memoranda and record representations from individuals and organisations. Some were marked 'Confidential', suggesting the sensitivity of discussion at particular historical moments, for example in the 1917 files preceding the 1918 legislation and in the 1920s, when Tory ministers referred to propaganda gains which Labour could derive from promoting nursery schools. Here, understanding was enriched by reading

unpublished Froebel Society primary sources which commented on policy and on individuals promulgating it. While 'political debates and contestation are often expressed much more clearly in documents designed for private circulation among only a small group or with close colleagues' (McCulloch and Richardson, op.cit., p.99), such records are rarely transparent. Machinations underpinning Froebelian attempts to convey their message became apparent as comparison of sources showed that published Froebelian documents presented edited – and sanitised – versions of private discussions, as in the case of discussion with H.A.L. Fisher on staffing of nursery schools in 1922.

Data for infant and nursery schools was sought in the London Metropolitan Archives [LMA] and cross-checked against records in the National Archives, where some HMI reports are held. The LMA's bound paper catalogues which list logbooks, inspection reports and minutes of managers are not indexed. It was also necessary to know in which London Division each school was located. Survival of material was not the only factor governing selection of schools; even where logbooks existed, information was not always sufficiently rich to provide adequate data and in the absence of additional sources they had to be rejected. LCC Education Committee minute books and the annual LCC publication *Education Service Particulars* supplemented primary sources for the schools and enabled pursuit of individual career paths with details of appointments and progression up the grade band of schools.

## **2.3 Private sources**

### **2.3.1 Froebel organisations**

The records for the Froebel organisations consist almost entirely of Council and Committee minute books; no correspondence has been retained although the minute books do, on occasion, summarise letters sent and received and some have been pated into the minute books. The archives of FEI have suffered substantial destruction, partly from damp and vermin resulting from inappropriate storage in

the college cellars. It is not possible to know how much material was lost because of this or whether records were simply not retained. The archives thus have substantial lacunae in key areas. However the LMA holds some exceptionally useful documents which have not survived in FEI's archives, including lists of college staff, posts obtained by students and a partially damaged pamphlet advertising a nursery and infant school course from 1932.

Amongst the most useful early records were minute books which had fortuitously been kept with Incorporated Froebel Educational Institute records in its previous headquarters nearby. However, such records tend to provide a somewhat terse and cautiously-worded account (McCulloch and Richardson 2000); this was the case with the FEI minutes, which fail to convey a rich, nuanced picture of key issues, but, nevertheless, convey a sense of history in the making. The period from 1900-1939 was one of growth and development for the college as it moved from a day college with hostels in West Kensington to a residential campus at Roehampton with erection of new buildings. Consideration had to be given to the purpose of these records; for a different viewpoint and more complex picture, a range of documents were consulted. Files of correspondence with the Board of Education, the LCC and the Institute of Education survive, however, no personal papers or correspondence have been located for the key figure in the period, Esther Lawrence, Principal from 1901-1931. Some letters of a more personal nature were found, for example emanating from Eglantyne Mary Jebb, who followed Lawrence as Principal, relating to her efforts to persuade the LCC to build a nursery school on the campus. Few staff records have survived; data was largely obtained from the IFEI *College Register* which covered the entire period, FEI annual reports and from *The Link*, the alumni journal which also contained a letter from the Principal. After her retirement Lawrence continued to write for the magazine until shortly before her death as she remained president of the Michaelis Guild. Despite their interest these were letters for publication and inevitably have a different tone to letters written privately to individuals.

Similarly, no student files have been retained; the College policy was to destroy records as new files were produced each year. Again, data was gleaned from the *College Register* which provides details



of educational qualification on entry, school attended and details of attainment at FEI – crucial details for examining the nature of FEI's student body. Student coursework provided a more personal record, including notebooks of lectures and teaching practice, samples of handwork, including paper-folding, a Froebelian Occupation. Records of college nature outings are recorded in the beautifully illustrated *Keston Journal*. Primary life history sources were drawn principally from material collected in 1992 as part of celebrations of the college's hundredth anniversary; this elicited written reminiscences from some of the oldest survivors. Autobiographical accounts need to be read with caution given distortions arising from the time lapse between the experiences, when they were recorded and the selectivity of memory (Freeman 1993; Hutton 2000; Cubitt 2007). However, discrepancies do not necessarily signify a 'wrong' account, simply that students experienced their college training differently.

A crucial area of research was investigating changes to the content of Froebelian pedagogy, and the development of new courses, in this key training institution, but prospectuses, syllabi and timetables have not been located. However, internally set examination papers provided a lens for this aspect, supported by reports of NFU examiners. Also of importance was evidence of how the schools associated with FEI put Froebelian pedagogy into practice. The FEI archives contains documents relating to its Demonstration School, Colet Gardens, and its Practising School, Challoner Street, which provided relevant data, including reminiscences collected for FEI's centenary exhibition in 1992. Also relevant for this aspect were the annual reports of the Michaelis Free Kindergarten, later the Notting Hill Nursery School (from 1915), and Somers Town Nursery School, both closely associated with FEI through Lawrence. Although ostensibly a means of conveying information, published reports for these two schools were written to ensure the continuance of essential financial contributions; as such, these accounts require cautious treatment (Scott 1990; McCulloch 2004).

### **2.3.2 Nursery School Association**

The archives of the Nursery School Association [NSA], held in the British Library of Political and Economic Science at the London School of Economics, were also scrutinised. In contrast to the archives of the Froebel Society and the NFU, the NSA files contained a wider range of material, including correspondence, providing a richer picture of the organisation's activities. An example of how correspondence can provide a rich insight into the complexity of relationships between organisations, and who speaks as its voice, concerned the vexed question of amalgamation between the NSA and the Froebel Society.

## **2.4 From raw data to concept formation**

A vast quantity of data was gathered. In search rooms details were recorded in Word documents with subsequent highlighting of key terms. A card-indexing system was employed, arranged according to personal name, organisations (including schools and training colleges) and keywords (for example curriculum subjects, teaching methods: centres of interest, correlation, project; types of staff in schools; Women Inspectorate). Scrupulous cross-referencing was employed across cards and between cards and notes taken in record offices; data in the notes were highlighted and transcribed onto relevant index cards, with reference to date and page of notes and, for photocopied archives, the reference number of documents. Cards for individuals record biographical details: dates, training and career; organisational membership; authorship, including chapters in edited books; references in official records, for example as witnesses to the Consultative Committee or as members of delegations; and links between individuals (for example Head Teacher/teacher; Principal/lecturer). Sources of information were recorded, for example obituary notices. Cards for organisations record source of information, personal names and document references, for example to witness evidence for the 1933 Consultative Committee, as part of deputations or as signatories to petitions. As research progressed the view of what constituted 'key' data was refined; the interesting but extraneous had to be set aside in favour of closer focus on interpretation of documents and what meaning they held for the research. Only once their significance was established could they become part of the narrative.

### **3. Narrative and story-telling**

In the period from 1900 to 1939 the Froebel organisations experienced structural change, with unification of the Froebel Society with the NFU in 1937, while the underpinning pedagogy underwent significant transformation. Without these changes the Froebel movement may have been near extinction in 1939, instead of remaining a significant voice in pressing for investment in infant and nursery school education, as data presented here suggests. These events lend themselves to narrative presentation. The role of narrative is central in much discussion of historical methodology (Ricoeur 1984; Ricoeur 1985; Carr 1986; White 1987; Lemon 1995; Mink 2001, first published 1978; Gardner 2010). Roberts argues that it comprises 'the most important and central debate in the philosophy of history since the 1960s' (Roberts 2001, p.1).

At the most basic level, narrative's multiple purposes encompass the conveying of historical understanding through the portrayal of human activity: in this respect the historian is a story-teller. The discipline of history is enlivened and illuminated by telling stories as a means of explication and reconfiguration of past events, albeit that coherence given to disparate events and assignation of key roles is a reconstruction reflecting the writer's interpretive standpoint. American environmental historian William Cronon draws on accounts of the development of the Great Plains to emphasise the multiplicity of possible historiographical narratives (Cronon 2001, first published 1992). This implies that narrative methodology is unfruitful in the quest for historical veracity, but Cronon argues that narrative is 'our best and most compelling tool for searching out meaning in a conflicted and contradictory world' (ibid, p.430). As noted previously, given the interpretive nature of historical enquiry veracity may be contested. Roberts summarises David Carr's solution as '[t]he truth content (or not) of narratives is established discursively on a case-by-case basis' (Roberts, op.cit., p.7); the intention in this thesis is to show the particular principles and procedures which underpin the interpretation of the Froebelian story. Studies of organisations at moments of change have employed narrative (Dunford

2000; O'Connor 2000; Cunliffe 2004; Czarniawska-Joerges 2004), thereby offering an appropriate model for this thesis, with its focus on a movement with a formal organisation at its core.

Critics of narrative (e.g. Ricoeur 1984; Ricoeur 1985; White 1987) suggest that the interpretive process raises significant problems of structure and language, the latter sharing common ground with feminist critical theory (Butler 1990; Weiler 1999). Historical data does not always fit neatly with narrative's structural requirements. There are lacunae, where documents have not survived or can be located; conventions of beginning, middle and end are simply inappropriate (Mink, cited by Carr 2001). French literary critic Roland Barthes suggests that as writers excise perceived extraneous detail in structuring their narratives, "scrambled messages" (*communications brouillées*) of 'real life' (Barthes, cited by Carr, op.cit., p.145) are lost; such simplifications may eliminate the nuances which embody the richness of human relationships and action.

### **3.1 Telling the story of the Froebel movement**

The story is about how a group of people, some of whom formally identified themselves as Froebelians through membership of formally constituted Froebel organisations, and others in a more loosely-based and fluid movement, promoted their pedagogy in the changing structural landscape of education from 1900-1939. Arguably, some joined the organisations out of expediency, some continued to identify themselves as Froebelians but allowed membership or association to lapse, and some never joined simply because they did not join organisations, but still regarded themselves as Froebelians. The story is no grand narrative of seamless progress; the thesis does not claim to present a factual account of achievement. The larger narrative comprises smaller stories, of effort and achievement by individuals promoting their pedagogy through teaching, lecturing and inspection, and as officials of Froebelian organisations, and of the creation and reinforcement of the cultural identity of being Froebelian.

Mink's critique (2001, first published 1978) regarding lacunae and structure apply here. The FEI archives are rich in some respects; a complete set of *The Link*, the journal of former students, survives, but documents detailing the college curriculum are sparse and personal papers almost non-existent, as

they are in the Froebel Society and NFU archives. Logbooks of schools headed by Froebelian headmistresses survive, but fail to adequately convey how Froebelian pedagogy informed their practice. Structurally, the time span of the research is 1900 to 1939; however the story extends back, but its starting point is contestable. It could be suggested that a particular formulation by Froebel of his pedagogy established a train of events; alternatively, the foundation of his kindergarten might serve as starting point, but it can be contested as to whether that was in 1837 or 1840, the year he reportedly exclaimed, '*Eureka!* I have it! KINDERGARTEN shall be the name of the new Institution' (Froebel 1886, p.137), three years after the institutions' foundation. For some Froebelian actors (E. R. Boyce, Kate Brown, Henrietta Brown Smith, Nancy Catty, Rose Monkhouse, Grace Owen, Frances Roe, Edith Warr) the story by no means ended in 1939; their particular contribution was still in train. Discussion of some key figures (Kitty Bathurst, Brown Smith, Esther Lawrence, Elsie Riach Murray, Grace Owen, *inter alia*) has continued (Brehony 2000a; Read 2003; Gordon 2004; Read 2004d); in that sense their story has yet to end.

### **3.2 The missing dimension in the historiography of education: a feminist critique**

From 1900 to 1939 educational policy secured higher salaries and career progression for male HMs and for male teachers at a time of retrenchment. A significant example, which may have affected Froebelian infant school teachers, was loss of posts for infant headmistresses as primary schooling was re-constructed in the 1920s and 30s. Conference minutes of the National Union of Women Teachers (NUWT. Conference Minutes, 1923-32) show this was bitterly contested (Kean and Oram 1990; Kean 1990; Oram 1996; Oram 2007). Feminist critiques exploring womens' experiences, and methodologies for researching them (Steedman 1986; Riley 1988; Scott 1988; Butler 1990; Purvis 1992; Scott 1992; Stanley 1992; Stanley and Wise 1993; Scott 2011), provide the broad foundation for investigating these issues. Carr conceptualises the possibility for narratives to convey discontinuities between reality and story as sinister, not simply as accidental distortion but 'an instrument of power and manipulation' (Carr, op.cit., p. 146). Carr's conception of reality is unexplained but nevertheless his point is pertinent. The stories told, until recently, by overwhelmingly male historians of 'progressive'

or the 'new' education (Simon 1965; Selleck 1967; Selleck 1968; Simon 1974) and of elementary and infant schools (Rusk 1933; Birchenough 1938) ignore women's contributions and trivialise their role as teachers (Purvis 1985; Purvis 1992). Selleck's later work on primary schools (1972) only partially addresses this imbalance, given the predominance of women in this arena. Possibly, omissions reflect the interest of authors in structural issues of educational policy-making and management, from which women were for the most part excluded, or a habit of mind which fails to conceive of women as active agents in these processes. These narratives have the power to shape readers' conceptions of what men do and women do, and historically, who did what, reinforcing and reproducing inequities. There are exceptions in the historiography; Froebelian Thomas Rayment (1937) cites the work of a number of the women discussed in this thesis in his chapters on infant and nursery schools, including Murray, Brown Smith, and Mabel Wellock. Recent work has redressed the balance more substantially; Brehony (2000a) writes on UK revisionist Froebelians and on their responses to child study theory (Brehony 2009a); Nawrotzki (2007; 2009) highlights the two-way transatlantic crossings of Froebelian pedagogy. Writing broadly of teacher-training, Cunningham and Gardner (2004) draw on oral history to explore the transition from student to teacher. The work of these writers supports Ricoeur's view that narrative can provide a mechanism for imagining a larger world of possibility (Carr 2001; Scott 2011).

### **3.3 Biographical narratives and feminist enterprise: locating individual and collective agency by Froebelian women**

This thesis explores a significant period in the history of an educational organisation and movement with an overwhelmingly female membership. Froebelian women had to negotiate asymmetrical gendered power relations in pursuit of their aims. They sought to challenge contemporary constructions of infant school practice and to shape practice in the new nursery schools; part of their strategy was promotion of a shared Froebelian identity. This investigation of individual and collective Froebelian lives was supported by biographical and life history methodology (Della Porta 1992; Erben 1998; Kridel 1998; Goodson 2001; Chamberlayne 2004). More specifically, the research draws on literature combining biographical and feminist theory which illuminates lives ignored in mainstream educational history (Martin 1999; Weiler & Middleton 1999; Goodman and Harrop 2000; Hilton and

Hirsch 2000; Martin 2001; Goodman 2003; Martin 2003; Bloomfield 2004; Martin & Goodman 2004; Martin 2007), or which explores issues pertinent to this study, such as women in educational leadership roles (Blackmore 1999) and institution building and networking (Eisenmann 2001). Froebelian agency was constrained by political, social and economic structures. David Scott draws on Archer (1988) and on Giddens' structuration theory (1984) to argue that 'human beings play an active and intentional part in the construction of their world, though that building activity is subject to structural constraint' (1998, p.34).

Froebel organisations fostered the formation and reproduction of Froebelian identity; extended periods of socialisation, during training courses and at summer schools, provided space for learning social and symbolic performances. For those who internalised the Froebelian mind-set, its objective meaning might be expressed consciously or unconsciously through the dispositions acquired. Here, Bourdieu's concept of habitus is helpful, suggesting that social subjectivity (Bourdieu 1990) is not taught but acquired through experience. Froebelians also knew their place in the educational landscape; they recognised those who were 'other' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), notably Montessorians.

In his discussion of what he calls progressivism, a term which Brehony (2001) interrogates, Cunningham (2001) utilises prosopography, or collective biography. He argues that key texts fail to convey relationships embedded within progressivism, albeit that in Selleck (1972) 'networks and structures become more central to the narrative' (ibid., p.438). Cunningham's framework of 'horizontal networks' (dissemination of ideas through cognate organisations and journals) and 'vertical structures' (official organisations) (ibid, p.439) is useful for conceptualising the web of Froebelian relationships as they developed up to 1939 with organisations and government structures. His reference to the 'persuasive rhetoric of critical thinkers' as an agent of dissemination (Cunningham, op. cit. p.439) pertains to leadership roles in movements, discussed in the following section. In this thesis individual biographies show how Froebelians exercised agency in their prescriptions and practice (Finkelstein 1998), as HMI's, teachers, college lecturers and Principals; some, such as Owen and McMillan, formulated more discursive sets of practices while continuing to wear the Froebelian badge. Taken

together, these snapshots of lives represent the beginnings of a prosopography of the Froebel movement and provide an illuminating alternative to grand narrative.

#### **4. Social movement methodology: Froebelian identity and leadership**

British Froebelians needed to establish discursive sets of practices which embodied central theoretical tenets, delineated the parameters of Froebelian identity and articulated a programme for action. Key figures required leadership qualities to perform the roles required for these purposes. These are explored throughout the thesis, as are relationships, between the Froebel Society, the core Froebelian propaganda organisation, and the Nursery School Association; between Society members and Froebelians active in the wider Froebel movement and central and local government, and between Froebelians and teachers. An example of a development in this period which required leadership skills and negotiation of relationships with those with cognate interests was the formulation of Froebelian policy for nursery schools, and lobbying for its implementation. For the purposes of this study, social movement methodology offered an analytical framework for interrogating what Froebelian efforts entailed (Diani and Eyerman 1992; Diani 1992a; Melucci 1996; Della Porta 1999; Crossley 2002). Its literature presents illuminating perspectives on these issues, although the primary focus is on groups engaged in collective action addressing political or social conflicts (Diani 1992a). Diani's conceptualisation of social movements suggests that basic components were met by Froebelians: 'networks of relations between a plurality of actors; collective identity; conflictual issues' (1992a, p.17). Networks, both formal and informal, facilitate the activity of such groups and quantitative statistical analysis has been employed by researchers to represent them graphically. Fuchs (2007) advocates this methodology for educational history; an example, Ball and Exley's (2010) analysis of policy networks under New Labour, identifies connections between organisations and between key players and utilises charts to visually represent them. However, salient points about the hierarchy of university affiliation of those at the heart of the networks as the voice of academia was being marginalised, are, arguably, conveyed more richly by the authors' narrative description. A qualitative interpretive account is employed in this thesis to convey the complex webs of Froebelian relationships and interactions.



While the breadth of the research could benefit from graphical display of these relationships, constraints of space obviated a dual approach in this instance.

#### **4.1 Froebelian identity: interpretations in context**

Social movement theory suggests mechanisms by which movements formulate and maintain a collective identity in a period of change with challenges from actors with differing perspectives on the issues (Diani 1992a). Transnational movement dynamics resulted in differing global interpretations of Froebelian pedagogy reflecting different national interests as states pursued their own agendas (Wollons 2000; Smith 2004; Nawrotzki 2005; Nawrotzki 2007; Nawrotzki 2009; Prochner 2009). In Britain, the paucity of free kindergartens, compared to the U.S. and Australia, was used to berate British Froebelians to do more (Lawrence 1913a; Murray c1912); yet critics did little to interrogate differing social contexts. Tenets of new pedagogical models were considered for 'fit' with Froebelian principles, and either rejected, as in the case of Montessori, or incorporated, as with Dewey, who made a substantial contribution to British Froebelian revisionist pedagogy (Brehony 1997). Froebelian efforts in Britain fitted into a broader spectrum of Labour-led endeavour to improve working class education across the age span; at the opposite end of the age range were demands to raise the school leaving age. In this period of austerity these quests were in conflict, showing how the aims of movements, in this case to improve working class education, could embody division (Della Porta and Diani 1999).

#### **4.2 Froebelian leaders: public and private strategists**

For Froebelians, class and social capital were factors in their ability to promote practice in state schools, as HMIs, and in attempts to gain access to policy-making channels (Bagguley 1992; Diani 1997). A critical role is played by leaders in inspiring commitment, creating and recognizing opportunities, devising strategies, framing demands and influencing outcomes (Morris and Staggenborg 2004). All of these were required as power dynamics were played out in inter-

organisational negotiations of merger and affiliation (Diani 2003), which are part of the story told here. Consideration of agency and structure requires acknowledgement of the role played by different attributes and types of leadership skills (Melucci 1996; Diani 2003; Morris and Staggenborg 2004); also, of the particular gendered challenges faced by Froebelian women (Blackmore 1999). Weber's concept of charismatic leadership (Bryman 1992; Morris and Staggenborg 2004) arguably applied solely to Margaret McMillan in this period. Designated a 'prophetess' by LCC Inspectors Philip Ballard, Gwendolen Sanson and Miss E. Stevenson in evidence to the Consultative Committee (Board of Education. Hadow Committee, 1933. Committee papers), McMillan inspired hagiographic accounts (Mansbridge 1932; Lowndes 1960; Bradburn 1989), but her colleagues were not compliant acolytes and nor was she immune to criticism. The majority of Froebelians worked less publicly but, nonetheless, made significant contributions to promoting Froebelian interests. Gwendolen Ostle is a case in point here, although her example also shows how individual agency can jeopardise structural relationships. Rivalry for voice could also sour relationships, as seemed to be the case with Frances Roe and E.R. Boyce.

#### **4.3 Froebelian activity: social movement, interest group or coalition?**

Froebelian initiative and action are in alignment with the 'change-oriented goals' and 'temporal continuity' characteristic of social movements, rather than of an interest group or coalition of interested parties (Snow, Soule and Kriesi 2004, p.6). Cycles of protest characteristic of social movements were a feature of the Froebel movement; in the period covered here, the fall of Geddes' axe in 1922 elicited particularly heightened activity. Further, Snow et al suggest that interest groups 'are generally embedded within the political arena, as most are regarded as legitimate actors within it' (op.cit., p.7). Despite advocacy for a sphere of education regarded as within women's remit Froebelians were largely excluded from the heart of policy-making structures, albeit that some occupied lower rungs on the ladder or were invited to submit memoranda; this accords with the view that, compared to interest groups, social movements 'seldom have the same standing or degree of access to or recognition among political authorities' (Snow et al, op.cit. p.7).

## **5. Conclusion**

The aim of this research was to find out how Froebelians met the challenges faced from 1900-1939 and whether, and if so in what way, they contributed to developments in education for young children. This chapter has set out the rationale for the choice of a qualitative and interpretive approach which rejects claims of proof as a chimera and identified how the breadth of the research opened up a number of possible interpretive approaches.

The chapters which follow seek to answer the research questions posed in the Introduction by offering an interpretation of evidence obtained from private and public archives and published secondary sources. The sources consulted situate the answers to these questions within the broader socio-political context and demonstrate the agency of unknown or little-known Froebelian women in the areas chosen for investigation. Chapter Two begins to tell the story of the Froebel movement with an analysis of developments in the Froebel organisations; in doing so it introduces the themes and some of the key figures who recur throughout the thesis.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Froebel Organisations: Developing and Disseminating Froebelian Pedagogy and Identity**

#### **1. Introduction**

This chapter sets the scene for those which follow by providing a brief summary of developments in the Froebel organisations from 1900 to 1939 and then charting two key aspects of Froebelian activity employed to promote growth and development of the movement. The first of these were the strategies employed by the Froebel Society to disseminate developing conceptions of Froebelian pedagogy as widely as possible. Secondly, the chapter describes how the National Froebel Union [NFU] adapted its curriculum and developed new qualifications to reflect new ideas and to ensure Froebelian training met changes in educational structures and practice. It shows how these initiatives supported the promotion and learning of a Froebelian identity. The chapter concludes that the Froebel organisations survived the difficult years to 1939, emerging with a revised pedagogy, a revitalised structure and an educational agenda which reflected new structures of state education for young children. Froebel Society local branches, programmes of summer schools and classes, and the Society's journal, *Child Life*, were purveying Froebelian pedagogy and Froebelian identity to teachers in private and state schools, lecturers in training colleges, local inspectors and HMIs and professionals working with children as psychologists and psychoanalysts.

#### **1.1 Testing times**

The period from 1900 to 1939 was a critical period for the Froebel movement (Nawrotzki 2006). New ideas about children's education and development threatened their pedagogical hegemony in the sphere of early childhood education. Montessori's 'new education', child study theory, and developing psychoanalytic conceptions of children's needs, presented a challenge, but also an opportunity, to

revisit a pedagogy already being subjected to criticism. The government's permissive clause in the 1918 Education Act, allowing local authorities to provide nursery schools or classes, provided Froebelians with a new focus for activity. Nursery schools, combined with greater encouragement given to teachers to develop more innovative teaching in infant schools, provided new occupational possibilities for Froebelians and potential to widen membership of the Froebel Society. However, the formation of the Nursery School Association [NSA] in 1923 presented a rival for membership and, therefore, funding. Froebelians were also concerned at the inadequacies of state-provided education for older children and increasingly discussed junior school teaching in lectures and publications. This represented a further widening of professional opportunities for Froebelian teachers. The chapter shows how Froebelians developed strategies to exert agency in negotiating the structural developments which provided both challenges and opportunities in the period.

## **2. Froebel Society to National Froebel Foundation: finances, ambitions and focus**

The Froebel Society, established in 1874 to promote Froebelian pedagogy and to develop professional training for Froebel teachers, was never financially robust; its funds were never sufficient to meet its ambitions. When the propaganda and certificating arms of the Froebel organisation were divided in 1887, creating the National Froebel Union alongside the Froebel Society, loss of funds from certification exacerbated these financial difficulties. Only donations from wealthier members, notably Secretary, later Chair of Council, Claude Goldsmid-Montefiore, kept the Froebelian enterprise afloat. Froebel Society Minutes show that in 1898 members felt the Society's financial situation had reached crisis point, nevertheless it was agreed to continue activity (Froebel Society. Minutes VII, 21<sup>st</sup> February).

From 1900, Council and Committee Minute Books indicate that the period up to 1939 was one of growth and activity for the Society, marked by determination to disseminate Froebelian pedagogy

widely and through different channels, some long-established, (training programmes; organisational networking), and newer initiatives (the Society's journal *Child Life*; local branches; summer schools). The re-arrangement of work in 1904 into three committees, Library, Registry, and Lecture, Conference and Propaganda Committee (Froebel Society. GPC Minutes. 8<sup>th</sup> December 1904) was followed in 1905 by the creation of a separate Propaganda Committee, on which the Socialist, former Bradford School Board member, Margaret McMillan, served. These changes reflected increased activity, for example the Society responded vigorously to discussions taking place about the education of children under five, prompted by the investigations of the 1908 Consultative Committee report to which they contributed a memorandum (Board of Education, 1908).

A further development was activity reflecting Froebelian concern at educational provision for older children. Key revisionist Elsie Murray was a central figure in meetings held in 1915 and 1916; her report of a deputation on junior schools to the Board of Education was minuted but few details given, beyond announcing formation of a committee to draw up a list of good schools and to identify areas where schools were needed (Froebel Society. Minutes X, 6<sup>th</sup> March 1916). A new name for the Society, the Froebel Society and Junior Schools Association, was proposed to reflect this widened remit. That financial motivation played some part in these discussions, with the possibility of additional membership fees, was evident in discussions and the recommendation by the Finance Committee in February 1916 to accept the proposal (*ibid*, 10<sup>th</sup> February 1916); the new name was adopted in 1917 (*ibid*, 5<sup>th</sup> January 1917). Further discussions regarding the Society's name recurred in 1935; on this occasion the policy sub-committee considered the retention of 'Froebel' in the title; it finally proposed the 'New Junior Association and Froebel Society'; however, no further action was taken or discussion recorded (Froebel Society. Minutes XII, 27<sup>th</sup> September 1935).

Society initiatives met with fluctuating financial success but, up to 1932, the Society made a small profit. Donations from Montefiore bailed the Society out at times of exceptional expenditure, as when it moved in 1932 to the 'house of education', discussed in Chapter Five (Froebel Society, 1933). Income derived from the NFU grant increased in 1932-33 from £200 to £350. Despite this, finances

showed a deficit in 1933 and led to renewed discussion in Council about the Society's future. Thomas Raymont, Chairman of the NFU, and Eglantyne Jebb, Principal of FEI, both suggested there was overlap with other societies; however, Raymont noted areas for economy and Jebb identified the unique role played by the agency for Froebelian teachers, which could be developed. As in 1898, Council decided to continue for a further two years, with intensive promotional work; one aspect of this, the preparation of a manifesto, is discussed below. The situation was to be reviewed in 1935 (Froebel Society. Minutes XI, 11<sup>th</sup> May 1933). Thereafter the NFU grant and further donations from Montefiore helped Society finances to remain in balance.

When the Froebel Society and NFU began discussions about amalgamation, they concluded that it would lead to 'great strengthening of the position of Froebel Education in this country' (Froebel Society, 1937, p.12); consequently the National Froebel Foundation [NFF] was founded in November 1938. This represented a strategic choice by leaders of the organisations to achieve common goals (Della Porta and Diani 1999) which were likely to remain unmet without greater financial stability. Nevertheless, evidence suggested reluctance on the part of the Froebel Society to renounce its identity. The two arms of the combined organisation continued to occupy separate premises, while in June 1939 the NFF's column in *Child Life* was still headed 'Froebel Society Notes'. Although probably an oversight, it may have reflected unwillingness to renounce the name associated with Froebelians for sixty-five years. A single NFF office finally opened in 1940 and the title *Child Life* was dropped in December 1939 in favour of the *National Froebel Foundation Bulletin*, under editorship of a former NFU official. Although stated to be a war-time substitute (Anon 1940), the title first used in 1891 and then from 1899, was never re-instated.

### **3. The voice of the Froebel Society: *Child Life* and statements of principles**

#### **3.1 *Child Life***

*Child Life* was first published by George Philip and Sons in 1891-92; although used as a means of communication it was not under the Froebel Society's editorial control. After it closed in December

1892 the Society used *Hand and Eye* instead. However, from 1899 the Society decided to issue its own journal and *Child Life* was resurrected to serve as a conduit for communication of Froebelian pedagogy and source of information about Society events for both members and other subscribers. Each issue contained editorial comment on current educational topics; news of other organisations; notices of Froebel Society events, including the annual Presidential address; branch and summer school reports, with printed versions of lectures; obituaries of key Froebelians and others regarded as friends of the movement; book reviews, and articles on a wide range of topics. *Child Life* reached a wider audience than any other activity, yet remained a drain on the Society's limited finances, despite changes in frequency and editorial policy. In the early 1930s the *Froebel Bulletin* was issued monthly for members in the provinces; essentially an information sheet, it was decided to merge the two publications in 1934 and to issue the journal as *Child Life Quarterly*. Its remit was wide: 'to consider the needs of the Infant and Kindergarten and Junior and Preparatory School teachers, as well as the parents of children attending these schools' (Anon 1933a). However, the decade saw ongoing debate about content and focus, for example, whether to give more prominence to junior school education rather than the nursery and infant stage, continued (Froebel Society. Committee Minutes III, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1932), with the decision to focus on children aged five to twelve (ibid, 13<sup>th</sup> December 1932). More extensive coverage of nursery school issues was rejected on grounds that the NSA had a column in *New Era* (ibid), the journal of the New Education Fellowship, founded in 1921 by Beatrice Ensor, which promoted progressive, child-centred pedagogies through its journal and international conferences (Jenkins 1989; Brehony 2004b). Despite its precarious financial viability the Society did not want its journal to be 'too popular in an undesirable sense of the word' (cited in Liebschner 1991, p.114). From 1936, more central control was exerted by the Library Committee, with guidance from an editorial board; it was claimed this strengthened the journal, although it still made a loss (Froebel Society, 1937). This optimism needs to be seen in the context of discussions on amalgamation and receipt of a larger grant from the NFU suggesting the Society was still struggling to maintain or increase its supporters.



### 3.2 Proclaiming Froebelian principles

*Child Life* provided a mouthpiece covering many educational issues but, necessarily, in brief. In 1932, the Froebel Society Council discussed proposals for a book relating Froebelian methods to modern educational research (Froebel Society. Committee Minutes III, 1932). Debate ensued as to who should be asked to write it, with concern that the author was Froebelian. The secretary Gwendolen Ostle, had written to Godfrey Thomson, Professor of Education at Edinburgh University; he had recommended Edith Thomson (no relation), lecturer in Experimental Education, then in New York working at Teachers College with educational psychologist Edward Thorndike and Charles Spearman, formerly Professor of Psychology at University College London. Evelyn Kenrick stated that Margaret Drummond (Edinburgh University) and Miss Mackenzie (Head Infant Mistress, Moray House Demonstration School and trainer of 'Froebel' students), were Montessorian, as was Percy Nunn, approached by Ostle; Thorndike and Spearman were 'definitely Froebelian' (ibid). It was agreed Kenrick should write to American educators Patty Smith Hill and William Heard Kilpatrick, and Montefiore to the Herbartian, Charles McMurtry, to find out about Thomson. Discussion in ensuing meetings came to nothing, although Edith Thomson expressed enthusiasm for the project.

The perceived need within the Society to restate Froebelian principles re-surfaced in 1935 with recommendations by the Policy sub-committee of the Propaganda Committee to produce a manifesto. The sub-committee included Brown Smith and Sanson. Brown Smith was designated to write on confirmation of Froebel's principles by recent psychological discoveries, a topic notably addressed by Murray (1914). She was also designated to write on the scope and nature of Froebel training (Froebel Society. Committee Minutes III, 24<sup>th</sup> October 1935). Others who agreed to contribute were Roe, on infant schools and Owen, on nursery schools, however despite discussion with possible publishers the manifesto was not mentioned again after the Council meeting of May 1937, possibly because of the amalgamation proposed with the NFU.

#### **4. Widening the remit: local branches and new audiences**

In 1899, the Society's annual report recorded increasing numbers of subscribers over the previous two years, with indications of further growth (Froebel Society, 1899). It noted that previous reports had often lamented the small number of members and, consequently, financial resources. The report also recorded that new provincial subscribers represented an increased percentage, from fourteen in 1897 to seventy four in 1898. It was this increase which led to the resurrection of a Society journal. Associated with this increase was the development of local branches, initiated by Froebelians in Bedford in 1899. This gave the Society a wider membership base, which is discussed later in this chapter. Branch activity grew extensively from 1900 to 1939, albeit with fluctuations of membership and survival of individual branches.

##### **4.1 Development of branches**

In 1900 just one local branch existed, at Bedford, founded in 1899. By 1914, there were fifteen branches, the majority in the north of England, with some in the midlands and the east; the south west had only one branch, in Bristol founded 1912 (Froebel Society. Minutes VIII). Branches created opportunities for widening the Society's remit, while initiating a move of focus away from London-based activities. The annual conference was held in Nottingham in 1905, in Wakefield in 1906 and, subsequently, in other towns and cities. This helped to spread the organisational load and provided opportunities to liaise with other locally-based groups and national organisations, apart from the Froebel Society. Lectures delivered in Bradford in 1906 on child development and school hygiene were arranged jointly by local branches of the Teachers' Guild, Educational Handwork Association and Froebel Society (Froebel Society, 1907). Manchester, which rivalled London as centre of the Froebel movement in the 1860s and 70s, had a branch which was particularly active in liaising with local branches of other organisations. Under its original title, 'Manchester Kindergarten Association', meetings were held conjointly with local branches of the British Child-Study Association and the

Teachers' Guild. The Leeds branch was inaugurated in 1908 following Alice Ravenhill's lecture on 'What Froebel has done for children'; it recruited sixty members in its first year (Froebel Society, 1909).

Branches closed or suspended activity during World War One and the economic downturn of the 1920s, but interest in local branches remained resilient. In October 1934 eight branches were listed in *Child Life*: Chesterfield, Durham, Liverpool, Middlesbrough, Newport, Sheffield, South Derbyshire and District, and Torquay and Paignton. Affiliated societies existed in Bolton, Bradford, Hull, Leeds and Southampton. The network remained strongly based in the north, with a more variable presence in other areas.

#### **4.2 Relationships between the parent body and its branches**

The Society established procedural rules to manage its relations with branches, requiring a minimum of thirty members for formation of a branch, affiliation to the Society, payment of a per capita fee and submission of an annual report. The growth of branches boosted the Society's membership, but the capitation fee created friction. Bedford reconstituted itself as an independent organisation in 1904. The fee levy may have driven this, although freedom to undertake independent action was also a possible motivation (Liebschner 1991). This suggests possible tension between the central body and the wider movement. However by 1906 the Bedford organisation was one of those working in alliance with the Society and was listed as such on the heading of the Annual Report. The issue of capitation remained unresolved; it was the principal topic discussed at a meeting of branch secretaries in 1916 (Froebel Society. Committee Minutes I, 25<sup>th</sup> May 1916).

The objects of branches were those for the parent body but they were not required to promote all of them. Activities listed included organisation of lectures, demonstrations and the establishment of lending libraries; inspection and regulation of kindergartens, for example, were retained centrally. The Society's 1908 Annual Report cited the particular contribution of propaganda work by Brown Smith, McMillan, Murray, Ravenhill, Miss M Penstone, and Hermione Unwin, in contributing to formation of new branches and as speakers at branch meetings. All were active in the parent body too; Penstone,

Vice-Principal of the Home and Colonial College, lectured for the Society, contributed to *Child Life* and was a Governor of the NFU. Unwin lectured for the Society, edited *Child Life* and served on the sub-committee which liaised with branches.

A meeting of branch secretaries was held in May 1916 to air general issues but especially the thorny capitation levy (Froebel Society. Committee Minutes II, 25<sup>th</sup> May 1916). A second meeting, of branch secretaries and delegates, was held in London in 1927, again to provide a forum for discussion of issues relevant to all (Froebel Society. Committee Minutes II, 4<sup>th</sup> January 1927). In 1928, amalgamation of infant and junior schools was seen by delegates as a threat to experimental infant school teaching. The issue of loss of infant school head teacher posts in combined junior schools led by men was subject to much discussion within the National Union of Women Teachers (NUWT, 1923-32; 1933-55), reflecting its engagement with contemporary feminist politics (Kean and Oram 1990; Copelman 1996; Oram 1996). This was not discussed or included in the subsequent Froebel Society resolution to the Board of Education. This is surprising, given the Froebelian concern for professional status based on gendered notions of role (National Froebel Union, [193-]), while support on this issue may have supported closer links between Froebelians and infant teachers.

Growth of branches, and discussions within them, demonstrate significant developments in the Froebel movement. It had become a nationwide network whose members might have more than one organisational affiliation. Unfortunately, lack of data has not made it possible to ascertain how far branches widened the social base of the Froebel movement.

#### **4.3 Composition of branch membership**

Branches widened the Society's membership base beyond the metropolis; investigating how it broadened its composition beyond its middle class and professional base in private kindergartens and schools was hampered by the limited number of annual reports which were located; these are from the

first decade of the century and two from the 1930s. These later reports did not provide detailed breakdowns of branch membership according to gender and affiliation. Lists of subscribers and their affiliations for four branches for 1906 were published in 1907: Bradford (founded 1901), Durham & North Riding (1904), Nottingham (1905) and Wakefield (1906) (Froebel Society, 1907). Fig. 1 shows that membership was overwhelmingly female, with a predominance of teachers from infant schools and departments, suggesting the interest of this group in developing their professional knowledge.

Branch	Membership in 1906	Women	Men	School affiliation
Bradford	97	94	3 [including 1 doctor and 1 HMI]	Infant schools/departments: 51 Council: 2; Junior: 1; National: 2; Special: 3; Girls Grammar/High schools: 4; Froebelian/kindergarten: 2
Durham & North Riding	48	48	0	[not given]
Nottingham	245	239 [including: Inspectors x2: including Jane Roadknights]	6 [including a Professor, University College, Nottingham; doctor; clergy, councillor]	Council schools: 140 Infants: 3; Catholic: 6 Defective/blind: 5; Trust: 51; Girls' high schools: 5 Froebelian/kindergarten: 2
Wakefield	87	87	-	Infants' departments: 50 Junior departments: 4 Girls: 2; Boys: 1 Mixed: 5 Girls' High Schools: 1 Boys' prep: 1

Fig. 1 Froebel Society. Membership and affiliation, 1906

Nottingham's branch was instigated by Jane Roadknights whose commitment to Froebelian pedagogy underpinned her practice as teacher and organiser of a model kindergarten at Blue Bell Infant School, and, significantly, inspector of infant schools in Nottingham from 1902 (Bloomfield 2004). Activity as Froebel Society members seemed acceptable for Inspectors but Miss M. Hill and Henrietta Brown Smith, were required to resign as Council members on their appointment as HMIs in 1915 and 1922 respectively. Brown Smith continued to chair lectures for the Society but did not lecture herself.

The first report of the Leeds Branch provided the professional affiliation of its provisional committee (Froebel Society, 1909). The list suggested that the potential to widen membership of the Society beyond those working in private kindergartens was being fulfilled. The committee consisted of twenty eight members, apart from the Branch President and seven officials. The remaining twenty members were women and, apart from a female doctor and a member who gave no affiliation, seven were Headmistresses of Infants Departments, three worked in special schools, four in girls' schools, including High Schools, two lectured at Leeds University and one at City of Leeds Training College. Only one member gave 'kindergarten' as her affiliation and the list shows that Froebelians were accessing a wide range of professional activity. However, because data from branches across the country is not available it is not possible to trace patterns of development. A further lacuna in the data is omission of membership figures in later Annual Reports from 1933 and 1937, although members of managing committee and the events of the year are listed. The latter provide a picture of issues of interest to Froebelians toward the end of the period.

#### **4.4 Branch lecturers and their topics**

Demand from branches for lectures and suggestions for who should undertake them was subject to much discussion by the Society's Lecture Committee, providing evidence of how highly this work was regarded. Lectures presented at branches reflect how Froebelians sought to appeal to infant and junior school teachers as well as kindergarten mistresses. In 1904 key revisionists lectured in Manchester, including Elsie Murray on the kindergarten and J.J. Findlay on the personal influence of the teacher (Anon 1904). Kate Phillips, from the London County Council, spoke to members in Derby in 1908 on coordination of infant school methods with those of the Lower Standards (Froebel Society, 1909). Henrietta Brown Smith lectured on transition classes as a link between infant schools and the Lower Standards in Northampton in 1917 (Bishop 1918). In 1933 her paper on subjects in infant and junior schools attracted a large audience in Liverpool (Froebel Society, 1934). Both Phillips and Brown Smith were key figures in the central organisation and based in London. Council and Propaganda Committee members Ravenhill and McMillan were also active as branch lecturers. Ravenhill was

principally concerned with health and welfare issues and lectured in home economics at the University of London. She was also active in the eugenics movement as a Council member and speaker for the Eugenics Education Society and author of a pamphlet on eugenics aimed at women (Ravenhill 1910). These concerns, allied with interest in Froebel, corresponded with those of McMillan; Ravenhill was a vice president of the Bradford branch and a useful conduit for Froebelian ideas in other organizations with which she had links, sometimes as Froebel Society delegate, as in 1905 at the AGM of the National Union of Women Workers (Froebel Society. GPC Minutes, 1892-1906, June 1905). Nursery schools were high on the Froebel Council's agenda in 1905, with preparation of a memorandum for presentation to the Board of Education. Ravenhill joined the delegation to deal with health issues such as infection in schools (Froebel Society. Minutes IX. 1904-1907, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1905). She resigned from the Council in 1908, citing increasing work for non-attendance at meetings (Froebel Society, 1909), and left for Canada in 1910. Margaret McMillan visited the new Leeds branch in 1909; according to the branch correspondent, McMillan provided 'a call of arms for all who were fortunate enough to be present' (ibid, p.29). In 1909 McMillan toured Scotland, lecturing at Dunfermline, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen with much success: 'large audiences of teachers have assembled to hear the addresses, especially at Glasgow, where the attendance numbered upwards of five hundred' (Anon 1909, p.230). Eulogistic reports require cautious reading, but this factual statement shows positive interest in McMillan, as a Scot and as a figure whose writings and speeches were achieving renown.

Branches were active in promoting discussion about the burning issue of nursery schools. In 1917, Grace Owen spoke in Bradford in her capacity as Organizing Secretary of the Manchester and Salford Council for Day Nurseries and Nursery Schools (Lister 1918); McMillan lectured in Northampton on 'Mr Fisher's Bill and its fate', focusing on its provision for nursery schools. She re-conceptualised the role of infant teachers, stressing that nursery schools did not obviate the need for them. There was unity in the aims of nursery and infant schools; what was required was obtaining for them the environment and conditions appropriate for their work, in place of formal conditions which still largely prevailed (Bishop 1918). In aligning infant and nursery teachers as a unified professional group,

McMillan isolated those working in day nurseries, where meeting health and welfare needs was paramount. These lectures show how Froebelians actively engaged in developing and promoting their conception of nursery school education and helped to alleviate the concerns of infant teachers regarding these new schools.

## **5. Relationships with infant teachers**

The nineteenth century composition of the Society was previously noted. For the movement to grow and achieve its aim of promoting Froebelian pedagogy more widely it needed to reach a wider constituency of teachers in state schools. A resolution passed at the 1898 Froebel Society AGM sought engagement with elementary school teachers to encourage adoption of Froebelian pedagogy in infant schools. Opportunities for this developed in the period from 1900-1939, at a time when considerable changes were taking place in Froebelian pedagogy and in practice in infant schools. Early in the period the rigid practices of some Froebelians in private kindergartens were hotly debated within the Society (Murray 1901; Wallas 1901; Murray 1903). Contemporaneously, and prior to Montessori's appearance in the arena, some infant school teachers were attempting to introduce less formal activities with the Froebel Gifts as part of a process of broadening the curriculum and introducing more appropriate teaching methods, as shown in the example of revisionist practice at the beginning of the period discussed in Chapter Seven.

Apart from the branch activities analysed previously, there were other possibilities for disseminating Froebelian pedagogy to infant teachers, through summer schools, discussed in the following section, and by election of teachers and LEA inspectors to the Society's Council. Mrs Smith, Head Mistress of the Infant Department of Brockley Road LCC School, was elected to Council in 1908. In the same year LCC District Inspector, Miss M.E. Turner, joined her colleague Philip Ballard, on the Council. Frederick Rose, Assistant Educational Adviser to the LCC, and Kate Phillips, LCC Inspector of Method in Infant Schools, were also Council members at this time. Organisational membership by state teachers and



others in the educational bureaucracy represents interest in pedagogic approaches which contributed to wider professionalisation as ideas were disseminated through classroom practice and inspection.

During the 1920s and 1930s London infant school teacher Frances Roe played a significant role in Froebel Society activities, indeed, she was still a member of the Governing Body (by then NFF) on her death in 1944 and a memorial library was created with a special bookplate. Roe promoted Froebelian pedagogy in a number of infant schools and was an invited witness to the Consultative Committee on Infant and Nursery Schools (Board of Education, 1933), in her capacity as Headmistress of the Marlborough Infant School. Roe described her work as a Froebel-trained headmistress in a number of books and articles in *Child Life* (Roe 1933; Roe 1936; Boyce 1938; Roe 1943); her practice is discussed in Chapter Seven. Apart from school teaching Roe promoted Froebelian pedagogy through lectures for Froebel Society evening classes, and as organiser of part-time classes and summer schools. She is an outstanding example, but other Council members were also infant school head teachers. In 1934, for example, there was Rose Solomon of the Jews' Infants School, author of the chapter on the infant school in the Society's jubilee pamphlet *Then and Now*; Solomon was still on the Council in 1938. Also present in 1934 was Florence Webb, Head Teacher of Haverstock Hill Infant School; like Roe, Webb was an invited witness to the 1933 Committee. The connection with the Marlborough was still being maintained in 1938, through Miss V.M. Johnson. Two further LCC schools were also represented, Princeton Street, Holborn (Miss A Bevan) and Monteith Road, Bow (W.C. McHarrie). Evidence shows a substantial body of representation from the LCC; this gave the Society a channel for communication of its views on education of young children. It also demonstrated that Froebelians were penetrating the bureaucratic structures which gave them access to power over schools and their practices.

## **6. Learning to be Froebelian: identity, pedagogy and performance**

### **6.1 Froebel Society summer schools**

The programme of summer schools, which ran throughout the period, built on a long-established tradition within the Society of holding conferences and lecture series. The Society's first Annual Report listed 'lectures, discussions, and public meetings' and '[t]he formation of training classes' as means of publicising Froebelian pedagogy (Froebel Society, 1875, p.5-6). The Society held its first holiday course in London, over ten days in January 1896, to introduce teachers who had not attended training colleges to Froebelian pedagogy (Froebel Society, 1896). It combined theory, with lectures on the Gifts and Occupations, nature knowledge and Pestalozzi, with practical demonstrations of kindergarten teaching. Courses followed in 1897, also in London, attended by seventy one students including elementary teachers and kindergarten mistresses (Froebel Society, 1897). Under the new title, summer school, the course was held in Broadstairs in 1913, and continued regularly to 1939. These initiatives mirrored those of other educational organisations, including the Sloyd Association in Naas, Sweden, one of which had been attended by Emily Lord in 1888 (Brehony 1998).

Courses were also run by local education authorities from 1902, suggesting the quickening pace of professionalisation of teachers of young children. Ostle drew attention to this facet of activity in correspondence with the Nursery School Association regarding amalgamation in 1925, as evidence of the Society's successful enterprise (Nursery School Association, 12 February 1925). The schools were relatively successful financially, according to attendance, with the 1933 school making a profit of £150. They also gained approval from HMIs; following the successful inspection of the 1913 summer school they were recognised for grant aid (Froebel Society. Minutes X, 12<sup>th</sup> June 1913). The Society's Annual Reports summarised attendance at the schools and provided a picture of the range of participants. In 1933 sixty-six attendees included 'inspectors of schools, lecturers from training colleges, teachers from Overseas [sic], head mistresses of private and elementary schools, a lecturer

in philosophy from an Indian University, missionaries, and assistant mistresses...Students came from Scotland, Ireland, South Africa, India and various parts of England' (Froebel Society, 1934, p.9). The 1937 summer school attracted two hundred students from the UK and overseas, including Canada, Rhodesia, Uganda and Egypt.

Reports in *Child Life* included topics, summaries of lectures and professional and disciplinary backgrounds of summer school speakers. These reports disseminated Froebelian discussions on key issues, for example the developing discourse surrounding the practical application of psychology and psychoanalysis, to a much wider audience than the summer schools or the Society's Annual Reports could reach. In May 1918 the editorial anticipated that the forthcoming school would be 'one of the most – if, indeed, not the most – interesting' (Anon 1918, p.33). H.A.L. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, was to give the opening address on nursery schools; his Education Bill, with its permissive clause for the establishment of nursery schools, had already passed the committee stage of the House of Lords. In addressing questions of size and organisation Fisher sought to present nursery schools as an area for 'free experiment' and to enlist the Society as 'one of our most valuable auxiliaries' in the training of women for the schools (ibid, p. 67). His warning that costs had to be kept down may have raised concerns about commitment to a high standard of provision, but no editorial comment was made in this or future issues of *Child Life*. The Board of Education wrote to the Society to praise the summer school stating that 'the arrangements were very satisfactory, the staff of first-rate quality and the whole course suggestive and stimulating to the students who attended' (Froebel Society. Minutes X, 8th May 1919).

The summer school in 1933 focused on 'Recent developments in the education of young children', with speakers from a range of schools. Nursery schools were discussed by Miss Faraker (Sun Babies Nursery) and Miss Wallace (Columbia Market Nursery School), both in London. Brown Smith spoke on infant school education and Miss Bevan, head teacher of Princeton Street School, London on primary schools. Some speakers came from further afield; Hilda Gull, from Liverpool, whose book on projects had been published in 1932, lectured on the three 'R's'. Practical sessions also featured at the summer

schools, providing the performative element of Froebelian identity; in 1933 these included courses on music, drama, handwork and colour (Anon 1933b; Anon 1933f).

Topics at Bangor's well-attended summer school in 1937 reflected continuing engagement with Freudian concepts, first addressed at the London summer school in 1922. The issues discussed were at the core of Susan Isaacs' work at Malting House School, Cambridge, from 1924-9. Frances Roe's course of lectures on teaching children under eight dealt with how schools could address physical, emotional and intellectual development. Mary MacTaggart, psychologist at Maudsley Hospital and the London Child Guidance Clinic, focused on different manifestations of frustration in children. MacTaggart lectured for the Society and published in *Child Life*, reflecting on educational issues from her standpoint as a psychologist (MacTaggart 1933). MacTaggart's colleague, Ruth Griffiths, spoke on the association between children's phantasies and intellectual development. Griffiths wrote a number of pamphlets and books on child development which interpreted psychoanalytic concepts for a lay audience (Griffiths 1935; Griffiths 1938). Isaacs' student and colleague, Dorothy Gardner, gave lectures on child psychology and J. H. Badley explored the theme of freedom in education, reflecting on his experience as headmaster of Bedales, linking with Isaacs' experimentation at Malting House. Summer school lectures were directed at helping attendees gain understanding of the significance of psychological and psychoanalytical concepts for their practice. They also provided evidence of how some of those practising in new disciplines identified themselves as Froebelians, or at the very least, were willing to be associated with a Froebelian enterprise in which the Gifts and Occupations had become invisible, if not obsolete.

Despite the approach of war a summer school was held in Ripon in 1939, promoted as of particular interest to teachers of five to twelve year olds (Anon 1939b). The opening address, on the rights of children, was given by Frank Smith, Professor of Education at Leeds and joint author *Principles of Class Teaching*, published two years earlier. Brown Smith's favourable review may have led to Smith's choice as keynote speaker. She described the section on nursery and infant teaching as 'admirable' (Brown Smith 1937b, p.199) noting that the authors had based their book on J.J. Findlay's,

of the same title, but addressed developments in psychology and their impact on teaching method. This showed how Froebelians were re-visioning their pedagogy during the period; Findlay was himself an early revisionist and interpreter of Dewey, although his focus was not solely on the kindergarten (Findlay 1906). Other speakers included child psychologist Charlotte Bühler, Gwendolen Chesters, author of books and pamphlets on childcare for parents and nursery schools, and Lilian Pierotti, Headmistress of Kender Street School, Demonstration School for Goldsmiths College and tutor for the NFF. Assessments of the summer schools and the lectures by attendees were published in *Child Life*; as might be expected, quotations frequently offered hagiographical responses. Roe's lectures on infant schools were described as excellent (Anon 1939b), however, M.B.D.'s impressions of lectures at the 1919 summer school were more measured: 'all were instructive, and, *while the idealistic tone was abundantly present*, the practical note was by no means absent' (1919, p.89, emphasis added). Further remarks suggested opportunities for inculcation of Froebelian identity through immersion in intense and prolonged communal experiences: 'time was found for much social intercourse and recreation, and evenings in the garden were happily filled with tennis, games, dancing, music, and the never-absent handwork. Theatre parties also provided a welcome recreation, especially to students from the country' (ibid, p.90). The schools were an important means of reaching isolated teachers beyond the metropolitan orbit. An anonymous student wrote in similar vein in 1930: 'what a privilege this time of fellowship has been' (Anon 1930b, p.79). Communal spirit was, for some, more important than substance of lectures; A.R. Hindley declined to comment on them, instead her aim was to 'perpetuate and spread abroad the spirit which permeated the community' (1929, p.77). The project method, which involved group work on a specific reflecting children's interests and might draw on language, number-work, geography, history and handwork, was a focus in 1929; Hindley described the word 'Project' as the 'mystic word' while E.M. Hollingdale described those attendees unfamiliar with the project method as 'the uninitiated' (1929, p.78).

The language used by attendees to describe summer school experiences supports characterisations of the Froebel movement as a cult or sect (Raymont 1937; Brehony 1987). Social movement theorists suggest that emotional investment of individuals reinforces collective identity (Melucci 1996). Summer

school attendance fostered this, enabling participants to feel part of a common unity which involved the acquisition of habitus, the internalisation and reproduction of the orthodoxies of Froebelian beliefs and performances (Bourdieu 1993). Ellen Elliott referred to the 'common joy and earnestness of purpose, a spirit of unity truly Froebelian' (1927, p.108). The charisma of leaders was central; Esther Lawrence modelled graciousness, a presence which 'brought with it a benediction whenever she passed by' (Elliott, op.cit., p.110). Froebelian dispositions of thinking and of being encompassed beliefs and values about the education of young children, and the role of the (female) teacher in that process. Reinforcement of orthodoxies, or *doxa*, to use Bourdieu's term (Throop and Murphy 2002), supported collective identity but could stifle or exclude transgressive interpretations. Froebelian pedagogy underwent significant transformation from 1900 to 1939 but there were instances of disavowal, as in the case of Clara Grant's heresy on the employment of 'guinea girls', untrained staff paid a much lower salary than certificated teachers (Kean 1990). Melucci suggests that '[p]assions and feelings, love and hate, faith and fear are all part of a body acting collectively' (Melucci, 1996, p.71); Grant's actions elicited a fierce response because she undermined a central tenet, the push for professional recognition, and undermined a largely united Froebelian stance. Summer schools facilitated reification of approved Froebelian discourse and its expression in particular modes of living and professional performance (Butler 1997). The ability for autoidentification (Melucci 1996) was central to the identity politics which had become significant in this period, given new organisations with cognate concerns (Montessori Association, Nursery School Association, New Education Fellowship, the child study societies). Lucy Howard (1930) provided an example of learning Froebelian performance in her paper on her work in her London infant school. She described how her attendance at the 1929 summer school led her to understand what should underpin project work. Howard observed a class led by Janet Payne: 'I also helped in a Project, and so realised the purpose of the Project Method. Again I went back to my staff, and we decided to make a real live centre of interest' (ibid, p.80). Howard and her staff had originally thought out and planned an activity on the doll's house, 'not realising that the centre of interest should come from the child. Of course we easily influenced them' (ibid); she concluded that 'it was not a fully-developed Project for that class' (ibid). Howard's initial lack of understanding of the Froebelian principle that children's interest should drive their activity mirrored

similar failings by nineteenth century teachers who adopted the Froebel Gifts but imposed their own tasks (Read 2006b). It also demonstrated how experiences provided by summer schools and other training activities could inculcate the spirit with consequential effect on classroom performance. Butler's notion of performativity suggests that the framing of significance within particular discourses can lead to material effect. Butler argues that such effects were 'vectors of power'; in Howard's case a transfer of power from teacher to children was effected, albeit with permission of the teacher (Butler 1993).

The range of professional backgrounds of attendees and speakers, and the topics discussed at summer schools, demonstrated the Society's engagement with a widening educational sphere and with the contributions which psychoanalysis and child psychology could make to teaching. This was indicative of developments in Froebelian pedagogy. The length of the summer schools, participation in lectures and practical demonstrations, and range of recreational activities, provided an immersion in Froebelian pedagogy which provided a strong foundation for formation and internalisation of Froebelian identity.

## **6.2 Learning through lectures and observation**

Dissemination of Froebelian pedagogy and modes of performance was also achieved through visits to kindergartens and Froebelian infant schools. Two hundred and twenty three infant teachers from London's schools visited Froebelian schools, colleges and kindergartens in 1906 under the auspices of the Society (Froebel Society, 1907). Teachers visited Froebel Educational Institute, Maria Grey Training College, North Hackney High School, Byron House, (Highgate), Malvern House, Lewisham and Passmore Edwards Settlement. Five hundred teachers applied to visit kindergartens in 1907 (Froebel Society. Minutes X, 1907); this might reflect personal initiative or it could have been required by Head Teachers or Inspectors. The large numbers of teachers who visited the infant schools of Mrs Shaw and Frances Roe are discussed in Chapter Seven. Froebelian conceptions of professional role were also publicised in written accounts and photographs of practice in free kindergartens, voluntary-aided nursery schools and infant schools. However such data needs to be read with caution; the

literature served propaganda purposes and may well have led to staged performances (Rousmaniere 2001; Read 2008; Nawrotzki 2009).

During the period the Society offered classes for different audiences, some targeted at teachers and others open to parents and nurses. The Society's classes for teachers achieved very successful recruitment but led to over-crowded rooms. Although this was a testament to success, Thomas Raymont's inspection reports for the NFU in 1930 and 1931 noted that the classes suffered from lack of centralised organisation, resulting in discontent amongst students (NFU, 1927-35). Students were interested and capable but lacked supervision by a competent trainer. Both issues had been rectified by the time of Raymont's 1932 inspection through the involvement of Frances Roe. Raymont's report was positive, concluding that the classes were now fulfilling their purpose and were set for further success.

## **7. Froebel Society membership 1900 to 1939**

The activities discussed above, combined with greater cooperation between educational societies and staff development initiatives from the local education authorities, provided opportunities for growth in membership. However, gathering information about Froebel Society membership was not straightforward; no full set of Annual Reports seems to be extant. In addition, unlike some organisations, for example the Nursery School Association, the Society did not include detailed membership statistics in their Annual Reports. From those Reports I have consulted, sparse data, amounting to outline figures only, was obtained; the only Report providing a list of subscribers and addresses was for 1906. Some of those listed identify school affiliation but this was not consistent so the data did not provide a comprehensive picture.

Fig. 2 shows how membership fluctuated between 1900 and 1939. In 1906 the Society had 817 members, an increase of sixty-five from 1904 (Froebel Society, 1907). Only nineteen of the members were male and the majority of female members were unmarried. Membership dropped to 628 in 1920;



this may be attributable to the demands and difficulties of World War One and its aftermath. Continuing low membership in 1925 may have reflected the economic depression of the 1920s; however it may also suggest that the formation of the Nursery School Association in 1923 was drawing away those interested in the education of the younger children. This is discussed in Chapter Five.

1906 AR	1907 AR	1908 AR	1920 Mins	1925 Mins	1933 AR	1937 AR
817 [+37]	892 [+75]	868* [-24]	628	659	742 [-12]	950 [=]

Fig. 2 Froebel Society. Membership sample, 1900-1939

AR = Annual Report

Mins = Froebel Society Council Minutes

+/-/= denotes figure in relation to previous year

\* 'This slight decrease was, no doubt, due to the formation of new Branches, which would be likely to attract members in their neighbourhood' (Froebel Society, 1909, p11).

Fig. 2 shows that by the end of the period Froebel Society membership was relatively strong and, of course, these figures do not include those who may have regarded themselves as Froebelians but did not join the Society. This brings into question whether the movement should be regarded as movement or sect (Raymont 1937; Brehony 1987). In the UK, characterisation as sect might be appropriate, although Froebelians saw themselves as movement (Woods 1920); on a global scale Froebelians undoubtedly comprised a movement (Wollons 2000).

## 8. Training to be Froebelian: the National Froebel Union

Apart from Froebel Society classes, NFU certificated courses were offered through college-centred training or private study. From its foundation in 1887 the NFU played a crucial role as arbiter of appropriate training for students taking the Froebel Certificate. Froebel training institutions followed the

NFU set curriculum and were inspected. The NFU allowed approved colleges, such as FEI, to set their own examinations while retaining the decision on classification of awards. Such power had potential to lead to conflict and instances arose of disagreement with the Froebel Society and with colleges. Annual publications, exam papers and reports of examiners from the NFU archives have been supplemented by published accounts (Liebschner 1991; Smart 2006). The time span dictates a snapshot approach; to gain an overview of changes the focus is on documents from 1904, 1925, and 1936.

## **8.1 Representation on the NFU**

In 1904 the NFU Board of Governors represented three main groups, the Froebel Society, the Kindergarten Company (Bedford) and the Home and Colonial School Society, with other co-opted governors. The latter represented the London Day Training College and Bedford Grammar School and also included Miss Penstone, former Principal of the Home and Colonial College, and a member of the Froebel Society. The Froebel Society had the largest representation, with eight governors. Of these, three were associated with FEI – Esther Lawrence (Principal), Emilie Michaelis (retired first Principal) and Maria Findlay. Other colleges, indirectly represented by Froebel Society governors, were Maria Grey (Elsie Murray); York Place, Camden House School (Fanny Franks), Norland Place School (Edith Vintner) and Blackheath Kindergarten Training College (Adelaide Wragge). Amy Walmsley, Principal of Bedford Kindergarten College, represented the Bedford Kindergarten Company; Jessie White of the Home and Colonial College represented the parent society. This represented almost the entire range of Froebel training centres, if not in their own right. Not represented in 1904 were the Froebel training departments of schools of the Girls Public Day School Trust [GPDST]; Clapham High School, significant because of the Froebelian activity of Lilian James, had opened its training department in 1898. Governors included Froebelians of long-standing; Franks was a founder member of the Froebel Society and one of the first students to gain the Froebel Certificate (First Class), qualifying in 1876 (Nuth 1948). She served as Council member (1881-1914) and Vice-President (1914-15) (Pridham 1921), and translated and adapted Hanschmann's key text on Froebel (Franks 1897). By 1925 the

Incorporated Association of Head Mistresses [IAHM] and the National Union of Teachers [NUT] were represented while two colleges now had direct representation, FEI (Claude Montefiore) and Mather College, Manchester (Grace Owen). FEI was also represented by Lawrence, serving as a Froebel Society Governor, while Clapham High School was represented by Miss Barratt, also a Froebel Society Governor. Saffron Walden Training College, provider of infant school training under the British and Foreign School Society (Lilley 1963), was represented by Jessie Dunlop, serving as a co-opted Governor. In 1936 the three main groups remained, although the Bedford Kindergarten Company was now the Bedford Educational Association, suggesting a broader focus of activity; representatives included Nancy Catty and Margaret Spence, Principal of Bedford Training College. Co-opted Governors represented Clapham High School and the Institute of Education (Percy Nunn) while Saffron Walden College was represented by a Froebel Society Governor, rather than in its own right. The IAHM, NUT, FEI (still Montefiore) and Maria Grey Training College were now grouped in a new category of additional Representative Governors. FEI retained dual representation, with Eglantyne Jebb as Froebel Society Council representative. Still represented, through the Froebel Society, was York Place Training School. This shows the relative stability of the structure of the NFU Governing Body over the period, with links retained with long-established organisations but with changes representing new developments, such as the Institute of Education, formerly the London Day Training College, which had come under control of the University of London in 1932.

## **8.2 The National Froebel Union curriculum**

The NFU curriculum in 1900 was intended to train students for work in kindergartens and differed markedly from the Government Certificate. The curriculum for the latter had been changed to include recognition of Froebel's contribution, in the option to study Herford's summary of Froebel's pedagogy as a set book (Smart 2006). Another change in 1900, reflecting a shift toward greater study of theory, was the renaming of 'School Management' to 'Theory of Teaching'. Up to 1906 the NFU curriculum required study of the Gifts and Occupations and Froebel's principles for one and a half years but excluded specific coverage of the three 'R's'. History of education, geometry and sciences featured,

but Froebel students did not study history or a language and, for geography, focused on physical aspects. Candidates took 'Music and Singing' and the 'Physical Education' paper included health and hygiene, particularly relevant for those who went to teach in infant and, later, in nursery schools. The following discussion refers to papers set for external candidates – students at FEI sat internally set papers.

Revisions to the NFU syllabus in 1906 reflected debate on Froebelian pedagogy (Wallas 1901; Murray 1903). 'Handwork' replaced the Gifts with the only reference to them in the syllabus for younger children, where 'building with Froebel's "Gifts" and other material' was now proposed, with emphasis on children's self-expression (Smart 2006). In 1910, 'Froebel's Principles' was dropped as an obligatory subject. Unsurprisingly, the Froebel Society objected and requested the paper be reinstated (Froebel Society. Minutes X). The NFU responded that while the letter of Froebel's writings might have been diminished, the spirit prevailed, accompanied by representation of recent pedagogy (Woodham-Smith 1952); this was not reported in the Minutes and no further reference was made.

Dewey's contribution was significant from an early point (Findlay 1906; Brehony 1997). Smart argues that he quickly 'changed the face of the movement'; by 1914 'it would have been possible for a student to pass the NFU Higher Certificate examination without having read any of [Froebel's] works and without having any acquaintance with any of the apparatus he devised' (Smart, op.cit. p.214). In contrast, students would fail without knowledge of Dewey's work; this represented elimination of an ossified form of Froebelian pedagogy, replaced by a new and more vigorous interpretation of the essential tenet 'self-activity', which led to its survival throughout the period. Writing in 1922 of Froebel in the context of Pestalozzi, Herbart and Montessori, Rayment compared earlier NFU syllabuses and examination papers with those of 1922 and argued that despite changes Froebel's spirit was still present (1922). A question in the 'Handwork' examination paper for the Teacher's Certificate in 1925 gave students the choice of writing on Dewey or Froebel:

Give a short account of Dewey's *or* Froebel's views on handwork, and say to what

extent you have seen them practically worked out (National Froebel Union, 1925)

The 'Principles of Education' paper for 1925 demonstrated how new pedagogy and disciplines had been incorporated into the NFU curriculum. Students could choose to write on a tenet of Montessori pedagogy:

"The fundamental principle of scientific pedagogy must be the liberty of the pupil" –

Discuss this statement in its theoretical and practical aspects (ibid)

Another question asked students to consider what practical guidance psychology could provide for teachers in understanding 'the interdependence of body and mind', while another required students to state the 'psychological facts' underpinning their view on how far it was possible to educate the emotions of children. Students could also write on the impact of differing standards of conduct in the home and school; this question also asked students to reflect on the usefulness of studying children's social environment. Possibly implicit in this question was the social hiatus between middle class Froebel students and their pupils in state elementary schools, in which some might go on to work. However, it might also reflect developing understanding that children from wealthy households might have problems too, a view proposed by Susan Isaacs (Isaacs 1929). In 1926, 'section B' of the 'History of Education' paper, which focused on Froebel's *Education of Man*, included the question:

What do you understand a teacher of to-day to mean who describes herself as a  
disciple of Froebel? (National Froebel Union, 1926)

The examiner for the 'History of Education' paper was William Boyd, reader in Education at Glasgow University, writer on 'New' education and President of the NEF's Scottish section (Boyd 1914; Boyd 1921; Boyd 1965). He noted that answers to questions in this section were 'distinctly better' than those for the general section and, for this particular question, were 'specially revealing':

It was evident that a considerable number of those answering this question were Froebelian in spirit and in truth, and had drawn from the study of the master not merely a knowledge of technique, but personal inspiration and help (National Froebel Union, 1926, p.10)

By 1925 the 'Physical Education' paper had been renamed 'Child Hygiene'. Two questions from the paper show how the NFU was responding to the increased number of students going on to teach in infant or nursery schools:

A schoolroom has large, sash-windows, occupying almost the whole wall and yet is often stuffy. (a) To what causes may this be due? (b) Could this state of affairs be remedied, and if so, how? (c) Why is it desirable to alter it?

Describe the buildings, equipment, and organization of any Nursery School with which you are acquainted. What are the aims of the school, and what is your opinion as to the desirability of increasing the number of such school? (National Froebel Union, 1926)

The 'History of Education' paper of 1937 showed that Froebel had by no means been eliminated from the curriculum; of two questions on Froebel, one asked students to assess his 'permanent contribution'; two questions in this paper were on Dewey. The paper for graduates and certificated teachers required students to answer two questions on Froebel and two on Dewey. One of these asked students to consider Dewey 'as a modern interpreter of Froebel'. None of the papers included a question on psychoanalytical approaches, for example the contribution of Sigmund Freud, or on the contribution of the work of child psychoanalysts Anna Freud, Melanie Klein or Susan Isaacs to understanding of young children's development. A question in the 'Organisation and Method' paper for graduates and certificated teachers asked candidates to discuss the teacher's responsibility with regard to new methods in educational practice. Arguably, students could discuss psychoanalytical approaches or reflect on practices such as project work or individual/group work. The paper on 'Principles of Education' set for the Trainer's Diploma included a question on the 'functions and value of the Child Guidance Clinics'; candidates for the Nursery School Diploma took a paper on 'Psychology

and Hygiene', with questions on thumb-sucking by four-year-olds, fear in children under five, and the debate on how much freedom should be permitted to children of five. Interestingly, given the focus of the 1937 Bangor Summer School, the 1938 'Principles of Education' paper for the Teacher's Certificate included questions on day-dreaming, behaviour difficulties, and the role of play in emotional and social development, with focus on inferiority in children. Similar questions were set for candidates for the Trainer's Diploma; one asked candidates to discuss what help modern psychologists could give in addressing 'personality defects', including shyness and aggressiveness. The Nursery School Diploma's 'Psychology and Hygiene' paper reflected a very different set of concerns from the Certificate papers of 1900. One question asked students how they would deal with a child who was constantly spiteful, biting other children, and to give reasons for their response. Another question required students to explain how they would deal with the behaviour difficulties which might arise for an illegitimate child, living with foster parents, who saw their mother only occasionally. By 1939 the NFU curriculum had incorporated contemporary discourse to prepare Froebelian teachers to respond to the needs of the child in a different social world to that of 1900.

### 8.3 The National Froebel Union – qualifications and student achievement

In 1904 1,078 students entered for the Elementary and Higher examinations, fig. 3 sets out the distribution across different divisions:

Examination	Total number of candidates in all divisions	No. of candidates in each division	Passed	Certificate of Distinction (Elementary only)	First Class (Higher only)	Raised Class of Certificate from 2 <sup>nd</sup> to 1 <sup>st</sup> (Higher only)
	1078					
Elementary		513	320	13		
Higher, Part I		261	200			
Higher, Part II		304	189		10	3

Fig. 3 NFU candidates, 1904

The most successful candidates were those taking Part I of the Higher Certificate; for Part II, only a tiny percentage achieved Distinctions. The final column indicates appeals for a review of the grades, some of which were successful, on this occasion at least (see Fig. 3b below). By 1914 the Elementary Certificate had been withdrawn; discussion in the NFU Minutes (National Froebel Union. Minutes, 1907-1911; 1911-1920) show that this was part of the effort, also on the part of the Froebel Society, to gain recognition for the Higher Certificate as an alternative to the Government Certificate. In withdrawing the Elementary Certificate the NFU sought to address concerns about the educational calibre of entrants to the Higher Certificate; the Preliminary Certificate was withdrawn in 1905 (Smart, 2006). The Froebel Society also raised concerns regarding acceptance of the London University BA Pass Degree as qualification for teaching children in junior and middle classes. A conference organised to discuss the issue in 1918, chaired by Council member Annie Escott, Head Mistress of Clapham High School, was attended by representatives of a number of organisations: the University of London Graduates Association, Headmistresses Association, National Union of Teachers, and some representing subject specialisms (Froebel Society. Minutes X, 1907-1920). The resolutions passed were submitted to Senate House but no action was taken (Liebschner, op.cit.), showing the struggle to extend Froebelian conceptions of expertise required for teaching.

By 1925 the 'standard' qualification offered by the NFU was the Teachers' Certificate with the recommendation that the minimum period for training was two years and a term (National Froebel Union, 1925). This Certificate prepared students for teaching children up to the age of fourteen; some candidates took advanced courses in literature, geography and history. The extension of the curriculum to qualify students for teaching older children was accompanied by the change in name in 1917 from Froebel Society to Froebel Society and Junior School Association. From 1914 the NFU offered the Trainer's Diploma for those involved in training teachers. The intention was to give 'the right direction to the efforts which are now being made to train teachers of children under fourteen years of age' (National Froebel Union, 1925 p.5). The NFU introduced the Diploma in Handwork, aimed at teachers in middle and upper schools, in 1925. This represented a further development in its range of qualifications for teachers of older children. Its purpose was to 'encourage candidates to regard



handwork as a valuable medium of education, and not merely as an accomplishment or as a means of gaining a livelihood' (ibid, p.6). This was a broader, more humanistic understanding of handwork, beyond the development of technical expertise which had characterised nineteenth century practice.

Students were able to sit external examinations at regional centres across the UK and in Dublin. Approved colleges set their own internal examinations, for example Froebel Educational Institute, Bedford and Maria Grey. Candidates taking internally set examinations in 1925 made up less than one third of all candidates. Figs. 3a and 3b and 4 set out the number of candidates and their attainment in the Teacher's Certificate, Trainer's and Handwork Diplomas examinations in 1925..

Exam	Total no. of candidates, external and internal	No. of internal candidates	No. of candidates entering for 1 <sup>st</sup> time	Passed in all subjects	Passed in some subjects	1 <sup>st</sup> class	2 <sup>nd</sup> class
Teacher's Certificate	1451	445	445	682	455	19	279

Fig. 3a NFU Teacher's Certificate candidates, 1925

Examination	Raised Class of Certificate from 2 <sup>nd</sup> to 1 <sup>st</sup>	Failed to raise class of Certificate	Candidates taking advanced subjects	Passed advanced subjects
Teacher's Certificate	8	8	119	108

Fig. 3b NFU Teacher's Certificate candidates, 1925 [contd]

Examination	Total no. of candidates	Gained Diploma	Passed groups for which entered
Trainer's Diploma	5	2	3
Handwork Diploma	4	1	2

Fig. 4 NFU Diploma candidates, 1925

By 1937 the NFU had extended its range of Diplomas to include the Nursery School Diploma (1931) and the Diploma in Natural History (1935). The regulations for the Nursery School Diploma stated unequivocally that '[i]t is important to bear in mind that this Diploma is intended for Superintendents...and that it cannot be awarded to anyone who has not had definite experience or practice in a recognised Nursery School' (National Froebel Union, 1934, p.4). Its introduction was late in comparison with initiatives from colleges; Darlington Training College introduced a one year course in 1919 and FEI in 1932. The NFU stated that the regulations were 'experimental and provisional' (ibid). These developments, together with the change in name of the Froebel Society to Froebel Society and Junior Schools Association in 1917, showed how the Froebel organisations were widening their professional remit in this period.

In 1937 NFU examinations were held at fourteen centres (external candidates) and at six training colleges for internal candidates: FEI, Bedford, Maria Grey, Clapham High School (GPDST), Rachel McMillan Training College and St Mary's College. The total number of external candidates taking the Teacher's Certificate had declined from 1,450 in 1925 to 1,128. Candidates taking internal examinations now exceeded those taking the external examination by just over 50%. Overall the numbers taking this qualification were in decline, with 494 completing their third year, 323 in the second year and 311 in their first year of study. Fig. 5a and 5b and 6 show the number of candidates and their success, or otherwise, in the 1937 examinations.

Examination	Total no. of candidates	No. of internal candidates	Passed in all subjects	Failed in 1 or 2 subjects	Failed in 3+ subjects
Teacher's Certificate	1128	689	871	225	25

Fig. 5a NFU Teacher's Certificate candidates, 1937

Examination	No. of candidates in 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Successful candidates	1 <sup>st</sup> class	2 <sup>nd</sup> class	Aegrotat	Passed in subjects taken
Teacher's Certificate:	494	379	41	320	7	11

Fig. 5b NFU Teacher's Certificate candidates, 1937 [contd]

Examination	Total no. of candidates	Gained Diploma	Passed groups for which entered	Failed in 1 or more subjects	Failed in all subjects
Trainer's Diploma	13 (including 2 re-examinees)	5		7	1
Handwork Diploma	21	3	13	5	
Nursery School Diploma	6	1			
Natural History Diploma	1		1		

Fig. 6 NFU Diploma candidates, 1937

Molly Brearley, Principal of FEI from 1955-1970, was one of only five awarded the Trainer's Diploma in 1937. Of the thirteen students who took the Diploma three failed in 'practical teaching'; the examiner's report commented on weakness in dealing with students and handling of children, 'which should not be the case with experienced teachers' (NFU, 1937, p.16). This shows that Froebelian attempts to advance professional status were still impeded by the calibre of candidates coming forward for training, and the colleges were not overcoming their weaknesses.

#### 8.4 Inspection of training colleges

NFU inspections were held to ensure that colleges and training departments in schools were meeting NFU standards for accommodation, teaching and relationships between demonstration school and college. Approved colleges were placed on the NFU's register. Belvedere School, Liverpool, was rejected in 1929; Raymont and Murray reported seeing 'too little constructive work by the children...or

of experiments with new and progressive methods, such as that which is currently known as the "project" (NFU, 1927-35) Teaching of handwork at Coloma College, Croydon, was berated by Raymont in 1932; the lecturer was also in charge of the kindergarten class in the preparatory school. He concluded that 'neither the National Froebel Union or the students are getting what is sometimes called a "fair deal"' (ibid). Raymont's 1933 inspection report of St Mary's College, Lancaster Gate, deprecated the separation of college and demonstration school. He sought assurances of closer co-operation so that no 'serious change in relations' between college and the NFU would be necessitated (ibid). A similar, less strongly stated, critique was made of FEI in 1929, discussed further in Chapter Six. In 1927 Raymont wrote to the Principal of Westhill to elaborate on Murray's comments on its kindergarten. She had expressed surprise at the rigid timetable and the lack of 'real play, or of any purposeful constructive work' (ibid); instead handwork was timetabled for an hour, suggesting this met the adult's needs rather than those of the child (ibid). Teaching at Maria Grey College was applauded in 1928; here the 'Froebelian side of the work is in charge of Miss Kenwick, whose ability and enthusiasm are matters of common knowledge among Froebelian leaders' (ibid). However lack of suitable accommodation, particularly for handwork, was a serious disadvantage, only mitigated by possibilities for practice in the demonstration school, also in Kenwick's charge. Raymont and Murray approved teaching at Rachel McMillan Training Centre in 1928, but suggested students should do more preparatory reading. They also suggested that students should gain wide experience in a variety of schools. A similar recommendation was made by Raymont at Camden House: 'We should like the Certificate of the NFU to connote some acquaintance with the actual conditions of work in public elementary infant schools, nursery classes and nursery schools' (ibid). At Westhill in 1927 Raymont and Murray commented '[i]t is well, and indeed necessary, that the students should also make acquaintance with large city schools, including schools attended by the children of very poor people' (ibid). Such variety of experience was not open to students at Saffron Walden. Raymont praised the college and its teaching but commented forcefully on the inadequacies of the college's school: 'It is little less than a tragedy that...where you have an able and progressive college staff, you have a school staff which appears to be just a commonplace collection of teachers, even for a rather remote country town' (ibid). In the final years up to 1939 the surviving reports principally cover girls high

schools, suggesting the importance of these schools as a supply source for Froebel trainees. However inspections of Belvedere and Birkenhead in 1937, by former HMI Rose Monkhouse and others, criticised both schools for the limited range of teaching experience. Combined with poor lesson notes and records of observations the inspectors anticipated difficulties when students faced the realities of elementary school teaching. Colston's inspection in 1936 was more satisfactory in these areas and the training judged to be very good.

## **9. Conclusion**

The chapter has shown the strategies adopted by Froebelians from 1900 to 1939 to foster growth and development of their movement, to disseminate Froebelian pedagogy and to promote Froebelian identity. They actively engaged in developing the discourse of state-provided nursery education, advocated freer practice in infant schools and increasingly concerned themselves with junior school teaching. Froebelian pedagogy reached a wider audience, but there were implications for its interpretation by teachers lacking Froebelian training. New organisations gave those interested in young children a wider range of options than in 1900, but Froebel Society membership was higher in 1937 than in 1906. This showed the resilience of Froebelian pedagogy and its power to attract adherents. Despite continuing financial insecurity the Froebel Society utilised three core activities: publication, through its journal *Child Life*, support for the developing network of local branches, through provision of key speakers, and a programme of classes and summer schools. The Society's journal underwent changes of frequency and content in response to financial constraints, to meet the perceived interests of its audience and to widen its appeal. The nature of its content was debated, with trivialisation a concern of some members. However, by 1939 *Child Life* was a journal which kept Society members informed of key organisational issues and published articles and book reviews which presented readers with a Froebelian perspective on developments in psychology and psychoanalysis. Professional options for Froebelians widened in this period, to include state schools across the sector and voluntary-funded nursery schools. Summer schools provided grounding for teaching in these sectors, and, increasingly how the new disciplines could inform Froebelian teaching. The summer

schools, classes for teachers and those for a mixed audience, including parents and nurses, and local branches all provided training, but also the chance for more informal discussion. Networking opportunities opened up what had been a middle class movement to a more heterogeneous representation of teachers and other professionals. The work of Froebelian teachers such as Frances Roe showed what it was possible to achieve through adopting a revisionist Froebelian pedagogy which had dispensed with the appurtenances of the Gifts and Occupations. Lectures and writing by women HMIs encouraging innovative practice, notably Brown Smith, provided a very different face to those who had experienced the repressive criticism of nineteenth century male HMIs. These were factors which could promote a sound professional Froebelian identity and build on formal training in the 'academic' teacher-training colleges. At the same time the NFU curriculum was widening to encompass new pedagogy, based, in particular, on the work of Dewey, and new diplomas for new areas of teaching. The Froebel Society's engagement in activities which were expensive to run and unlikely to produce a significant profit showed its continuing vitality. Amalgamation in 1938 may have been experienced by some members as a disappointment but it meant that in 1939 the new organisation was in a stronger position to pursue its core agenda of dissemination and training.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Froebelians, Policy-Making and Implementation: Administrative Structures**

#### **1. Introduction**

Educational provision for young children was a focus for discussion and debate by educationists, by those concerned for children's health and welfare and by those interested more broadly in social policy in an age of imperial concerns and fears for racial health as the Board of Education formulated policy from 1900 to 1939. Introduction of nursery schools for children aged three to five had implications for infant schools for children of five to seven, resulting in proposals for combined schools for five to eleven –year-olds (Board of Education, 1931). These developments were central to the concerns of Froebelians and Chapters Three and Four examine their engagement in these debates, both within the Board and in the London County Council, as an LEA with responsibility for implementation of policy. This chapter focuses firstly, on relationships, between Froebelians and three key Civil Servants in the Board of Education overseeing formulation of policy and preparation of Bills and between Froebelians and two women Members of Parliament, who participated in debates leading to enactment of legislation; secondly it shows how Froebelians were involved in policy implementation, as HMIs and as inspectors for the London County Council [LCC]. It concludes that Froebelian attempts to establish relationships to gain access to policy-making structures through fostering relationships with key officials were only partially achieved, but involvement in policy implementation was more successful through the work of Froebelian inspectors.

Froebelians attempted to influence policy from the 1870s; a delegation in April 1874 to Charles Gordon-Lennox, 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Richmond and Lord President of Council from February 1874, included Beata Doreck, president of the Froebel Society from its foundation later that year (Ridley 1896; Read

2004b). Although unsuccessful, it sought to raise the professional profile of 'scholastic professors' by giving them similar status to lawyers and doctors. Following Anthony Mundella's appointment as Vice-President of the Education Department in 1880 Froebel organisations sent a deputation to him to press for wider adoption of kindergarten pedagogy. Mundella's interest in kindergarten work at Stockwell and in Germany, and the Code issued after the deputation in 1881, which recognised Froebelian manual occupations and play as a basis for infant teaching, no doubt encouraged Froebelians (Woodham-Smith 1952). However, inappropriate expectations by HMIs for achievement in infant schools continued; further representations for less formal teaching were made by infant teachers and Froebelian witnesses to the Cross Commission in 1886. The Froebel Society was represented by two Council members, Alfred Bourne, Secretary of the British and Foreign School Society, and the Hon. Mrs Buxton. The Society's précis of their evidence included more spacious and appropriate accommodation, with equal bench and floor-space; opportunities for games and exercise, manual occupations such as paper-folding and modelling; training in principles and methods for infant teachers under the government certificate, and inspection by HMIs who understood Froebelian methods and focused on lessons heard as much as examination of children (Froebel Society. Minutes III, 17th May, 2nd June 1886).

Policy implemented from 1900 to 1939 contributed to a sharp fall in attendance of children under five in elementary schools and addressed the consequences, demand for nursery education. In 1900, 622,498 children aged three to five, just over 43% of children of that age, were attending public elementary schools in England and Wales (Board of Education, 1908). Criticism of conditions in elementary schools for young children in the reports of women inspectors (Board of Education. Reports, 1905), resulted in authorisation, under Article 53 of the 1905 Code, for local authorities to refuse admission to children under five (Board of Education, 1905). As a consequence, attendance dropped rapidly; in 1906 attendance had fallen from the 1900 total by nearly 10%. By 1920/21 the attendance was 15.3% of the total and by 1930/31 just 13.1% (Board of Education, 1933). In March 1938, 166,190 children aged three to five attended elementary schools, out of a total population for this age group of 1,093,000 (Board of Education, 1939). A further 7,141 children were enrolled in one



hundred and three nursery schools, both provided and voluntary (ibid). Thus, by the end of the period, the numbers of children aged three to five attending elementary schools was significantly lower than in 1900. Delineations of policy development from 1900 to 1939 in published literature include little on infant and nursery schools. Simon's account of the political background to educational developments refers to McMillan's health and welfare work (Simon 1965), and establishes the broader context in which the arguments for nursery schools came to be made (Simon 1974); no reference is made to Froebelian contributions to contemporary debate. An analysis of Froebelians' relationships with key official in central government and with MPs addresses both of these gaps in the historiography.

The three officials discussed below are George Kekewich, Permanent Secretary to the Education Department (1890-1900) and Board of Education (1900-02), Robert Morant, Permanent Secretary of the Board from 1903, and Herbert Fisher, President of the Board 1916-22. The two women members of Parliament are Nancy Astor (Conservative, 1919), and Margaret Wintringham (Liberal, 1921); both became strong advocates for nursery education. Implementation of government policy in infant schools and training colleges was the responsibility of HMIs; local authorities had their own inspectors. The significance of the pedagogical stance of inspectors for shaping practice was evident in criticism by teachers and by the London School Board's Inspector of Method in Infant Schools, Mary Lyschinska (1886), that nineteenth century male inspectors of infant schools demanded military discipline and inappropriate displays of formal learning. From 1900 to 1939, women HMIs were employed in greater numbers, albeit in their own branch and with the remit to inspect infant and nursery schools, girls secondary schools, women's training colleges and specialist classes, such as cookery and needlework (Martindale 1938; Lawton & Gordon, 1987). This fitted a trend in government to utilise experts, and education of young children was indisputably an arena for women, claimed as much by women as designated by men. The focus on the work of LCC inspectors complements the focus on schools in London in this thesis. This choice was partly based on convenience of data collection, however early scoping research showed evidence of rich sets of relationships between Froebelians in London schools and of support by HMIs and LCC Inspectors for Froebelian enterprise.

## **2. Women as experts in formulating educational policy formulation: opportunities and barriers for Froebelians**

Just prior to 1900 significant changes were taking place in government structures for obtaining advice for its education policies, with questioning of what constituted 'expert' advice (Sutherland 1973). A new conception of the state, with an expanding interventionist function, accompanied major social changes (Simon 1965; Turner 1988). This had implications for representation on committees of increasingly powerful and vocal sectors, notably the labour movement and women's groups, including the overwhelmingly female elementary schoolteachers (Sutherland 1972; Sutherland 1973; Kogan and Packwood 1974; Macleod 1988; Kean 1990). This opportunity was grasped by Froebelians; from 1900 they were increasingly active in roles which enhanced their professional identity and ability to advocate for Froebelian pedagogy, as committee members and HMIs.

The concept of expertise underpinned re-structuring of the Inspectorate; women were appointed in growing numbers, as in other areas of the Civil Service, however, gendered power issues operated to circumscribe areas of responsibility, premised on maternalist politics, and to full participation in HMI life (Martindale 1938; Zimmeck 1988). Exchange of resources or services (wealth, power, expertise), might serve as bargaining counters in negotiating strategies in complex processes of change (Archer 1984). For women, particularly elementary schoolmistresses, teaching expertise was likely to be their sole resource and the social distribution of power did not provide scope or a strong basis for an assertion of bargaining power on professional expertise alone. For the Froebelian HMI Katherine Bathurst, relationships with the male HMIs to whom she was subservient were complicated by virtue of sharing their class status, despite her expertise. Nevertheless, the success of women in these appointments signified an attack on the 'gentleman's club' ethos of the Civil Service (Zimmeck 1988). That success was built on hard work and competence as they pursued professional status, undermining the 'equation of patriarchal masculine expertise with professional expertise' (Zimmeck, *op.cit.*, p.186). The example of Henrietta Brown Smith, a key Froebelian, is a case in point. The troubling of cosy 'boys' clubs' of educational leadership by disruptive women has been characterised

as exertion of a feminist gaze on masculinist structures (Blackmore 1999). This provided a perspective for reading Bathurst's career, but evidence did not suggest that her extreme position was taken by other Froebelian women.

### **3. Froebelian relationships with three modernising officials: George Kekewich, Robert Morant and H.A.L. Fisher**

Marginalisation and exclusion from male circles showed the significance for Froebelians of having sympathisers in key positions in the Board of Education, at a point in time when experts were increasingly targeted. Minute papers with manuscript notes in Board of Education papers in the National Archive support the view that 'informal and unstated relationships in educational government account massively for what happened' (Kogan and Packwood 1974, p. 2). Evidence suggested that such connections may have worked in favour of Froebelians. Key figures who stood out at the point when important structural developments and policy formulation for children under five were taking place were George Kekewich, Robert Morant and Herbert Fisher. The Froebel Society engaged these men in Society activity, opening up channels of communication. Their advocacy of, or, at the least, engagement with, Froebelian pedagogy may be interpreted as, in part, pragmatic, given the status of the Froebel Society. As a well-connected middle class organisation with an established reputation, it represented a body of experts at a time of growing discussion on young children's education; however evidence suggested that their support went further than this.

#### **3.1 George Kekewich: a Froebelian advocate in word and deed**

George Kekewich, Secretary to the Education Department (1890-1900) and Board of Education (1900-1902), stated in his autobiography: '[m]y creed was that the children came first, before everything and everybody' (Aldrich and Gordon 1989, p.140); such a claim requires scrutiny. Under Kekewich's leadership the Education Department issued Circular 322 in 1893, encouraging teachers to adopt freer methods based on Froebelian pedagogy for infants; in 1895, a further Circular promoted use of object

lessons. This may suggest that Froebelian lobbying, for example their memorandum to the Cross Commission, had been effective, however, the broader context was educational policy which reflected imperialist aims for a manually-skilled workforce (Kekewich 1903). Nonetheless, Froebelians responded enthusiastically to his expressions of sympathy with the Froebel Society's efforts to extend adoption of the system (Froebel Society, 1896). Arguably, Kekewich's political stance as a Liberal made him a natural ally of Froebelians. He was invited to speak at the 1896 annual meeting (ibid) and again in 1897 (Froebel Society. Minutes VII, 25th January 1897), but was unable to do so on both occasions. In 1900 he opened a new wing of the Froebel Educational Institute. When Kekewich did address the Froebel Society's AGM in 1903 he asserted 'I should like to see the Kindergarten – or, at any rate, Kindergarten methods – introduced into every infant school in the country' (Kekewich 1903, p.83). He argued that Froebel's practice required modification in light of new scientific knowledge but his overall objectives were now largely accepted; the aim of education was the development of all aspects of the child's nature. The kindergarten had influenced the elementary school where 'suitable occupations in the lower classes and manual work in the upper classes' were to be found (ibid). Kekewich did not dwell on manual training as a preparation for future employment, instead concluding that the ultimate aim of education was the production of 'worthy citizens and intelligent members of society' (ibid, p. 84). Although Froebelians lost this ally when he was ousted from his post in 1902 (Simon 1965) his successor, Robert Morant, was also involved with the Society.

### **3.2 Robert Morant: a tenuous but significant relationship**

Robert Morant became Permanent Secretary to the Board in 1903; previously he was private secretary to Sir John Gorst, Vice-President, Committee of Council on Education. The Froebel Society invited Morant to contribute to the lecture series in 1899; although unable to do so he became a Froebel Society Council member later that year but his attendance was not recorded in subsequent minutes (Froebel Society. Minutes VIII, 1898-1903). This was a key moment in the formation of the Board of Education, which replaced the Education Department in 1899. Also on the Council during Morant's membership was Lydia Manley, Principal of Stockwell Training College. The college had a long history

of kindergarten training and Manley, like previous Principals, was an active Society member. Another Council member at this time, Katharine Phillips, was a woman of wide experience, in colleges (head of the Kindergarten Department at Maria Grey; lecturer in psychology at FEI), as kindergarten instructor for the West Ham School Board, and, from 1898, Superintendent of Method in Infant Schools for the London School Board. Phillips described how kindergarten methods could be introduced even in the large elementary school classes (Phillips 1900). Despite Morant's inactive role, his agreement to serve as a Council member may have suggested sympathy for those aspects of Froebelian pedagogy which chimed with his imperialist politics (Simon 1965). Morant's views on schooling for young children concurred with those of Margaret McMillan, an agreement characterised as a meeting of minds (Steedman 1990). At this point a member of the School Board in Bradford, representing the Independent Labour Party, McMillan was a strong advocate for Froebelian pedagogy in that role (McMillan 1895; McMillan 1899). Morant met McMillan in Bradford during her campaign for school baths (Lowndes 1960); this association may have played a part in his brief membership of the Froebel Council. Agreement on the need to address young children's health led them to conspire across party lines in preparation of the Liberal legislation providing for medical inspection (1907) and school meals (1906). McMillan became an active propagandist for the Society shortly after Morant's departure from the Council. The importance of this, albeit brief, relationship lay in the powerful role Morant played within the new Board of Education, particularly in shaping policy for the newly formed Consultative Committee, required by the legislation of 1899 (Brehony 1994). The first meeting took place in November 1900 (Kogan and Packwood 1974). The appointment of Manley to the Committee in 1900 may have reflected Morant's link with the Froebel Society at this time. Morant's support for the development of the Women Inspectorate was also important for Froebelians, despite the gendered application of policy, however, after Morant's resignation from the Board of Education in 1911 his connection with the Froebel Society ended; Steedman (1990) makes no reference to any association between McMillan and Morant after 1912.

### **3.3 H.A.L. Fisher: constraints and conflict in implementing nursery school policy**

H.A.L. Fisher's Presidency of the Board from 1916 to 1922 was a key moment for development of nursery school policy. Arguments for nursery schools, as for welfare provision, reflected discourses of national efficiency which meshed with imperialist aims (Searle 1971). Although not invited to submit evidence to the Consultative Committee in 1908, a deputation from the Froebel Society had contributed their views on infant schools to Morant in 1905 (Froebel Society. GPC Minutes, 1905). They did so again to Fisher's Office Committee in 1917 which reviewed the arguments surrounding provision prior to the 1918 Education Act, with its permissive clause authorising LEAs to establish nursery schools. The Froebel Society memorandum stated that children needed 'right surroundings and ample opportunity for free individual activity; to train them in good habits; to help them towards the beginnings of social life' (Froebel Society, 1917, p.88). This required re-organisation of departments: Nursery, for children from three to six; Junior, children aged six to ten and Senior, ten to fourteen, a proposal which had significant implications for infant schools. Teacher qualifications should be either a government certificate, obtained at a college specialising in nursery schools, or the National Froebel Union [NFU] certificate; they should not be confined to nursery teaching because this might incur lower status. Following a conference in Manchester organised by Grace Owen, a deputation was made to Fisher in 1917 which included Owen and Lilian James, from the training department of Clapham High School (Brehony 2009c). Owen's report gave the tenor of Fisher's speech, which was reproduced in full in the Minutes (Froebel Society. Minutes X, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1917). Fisher summarised what he presented as the consensus but took care not to commit to any specific policy. :

Nursery Schools must be small, and must be in close contact with the home. There must be ample space and fresh air, and gardens when possible. Special precautions must be taken against infection. As to the training of teachers it is premature to formulate any special method of training. There is much divergence of opinion. This too, is in an experimental stage (ibid)

Brehony (2009c) argues that the Office Committee opted for Montessori pedagogy; although its report specified the curriculum should be based on 'modified Montessori' (Board of Education, 1917) the

Committee recommended equipment included 'such Froebel "gifts" or Montessori apparatus and toys as required' (ibid).

Clause 18 of the 1918 Education Act authorised local authorities to establish nursery schools and provided legitimacy to support for voluntary efforts however Fisher's relationship with Froebelians was compromised by the enforced economies which followed. Fisher's proposals to economize on staffing in infant schools led to correspondence with the Society (Froebel Society. Minutes XI, March, 1922). The decision was taken to send it to the press and *Child Life* but objections were raised on the grounds that the Society's letter to Fisher 'unduly exaggerated Mr Fisher's contribution to education' (ibid). The offending text was omitted in the letter printed in *Child Life*, replaced with the comment '[after some remarks of a general character the letter proceeds...]' (Froebel Society, April-May 1922). This suggested that the Society used flattery to gain the ear of Fisher in private but distanced itself in public. Evidence of Fisher's continuing interest in the education of young children after he left the Board was his involvement in Astor's work which resulted in the *Ten Year Plan* in 1935.

#### **4. Froebelians and two women M.P.s: Nancy Astor and Margaret Wintringham**

The first woman Member of Parliament to take her seat was Nancy Astor, elected to represent Plymouth for the Conservatives in 1919 (Brehony 2009b); with Margaret Wintringham, representing Louth for the Liberals from 1921, she pursued women's issues, notably the provision of nursery schools. Their election potentially gave Froebelians access to further policy-making structures. Like Morant and McMillan, the women worked across party lines in pursuit of their interest in nursery schools, as in Astor's work with McMillan (Steedman 1990). Despite sharing Froebelian concerns for young children's education, Astor was associated with the Nursery School Association [NSA], as Vice-President from 1924, although she did not meet McMillan, its President, until 1926 (ibid). However, she came into contact with Froebelians through their strong presence in the NSA; Esther Lawrence,

Elsie Murray and Freda Hawtrey were just some of those active as committee members, apart from McMillan. Astor was the driving force in publication of the *Ten Year Plan*, with co-writers Hawtrey and Wintringham (Astor 1935). This proposed conversion of infant schools into open-air nursery-infant schools for two to seven year-olds, rather than new nursery schools. Signatories to the plan included Fisher and Michael Sadler (President of the Froebel Society, 1904), and Henry Hadow, who met Froebelians during compilation of the 1933 Consultative Committee report. They did not commit themselves 'to every specific proposal' but regarded the plan as 'the basis for a new line of advance' (ibid). Little reference is made to Astor in the Froebel Society's minutes; Executive Committee minutes show that she accepted an invitation to lecture in 1936 on a series on 'The Ten Year Plan in Education' (Froebel Society. Committee Minutes, 28<sup>th</sup> May 1936). Council minutes showed communication between Astor and the Society continued, with the committee for the *Ten Year Plan* seeking its support for furthering the work set out in the plan (Froebel Society. Minutes XII, 11<sup>th</sup> June, 1936). The Society noted the close alignment of its principles with those of the committee, which sought new members and finance for its work. It suggested it would be in the interests of the Society to be involved and saw a role for *Child Life* in publishing reports (ibid). How, or whether, this was taken forward is not recorded in subsequent minutes.

Wintringham had direct Froebel connections; she trained at the Froebelian Bedford Training College from 1898 - 1901 (Harrison 2004) and was a Froebel Society Council member from 1921 to 1924. This showed her continuing interest in Froebelian pedagogy, although she declined the invitation to take on the more public role of President of the Society when proposed by Elsie Murray in 1923 (Froebel Society. Minutes XI, May 1922); however, she accepted a Vice-Presidency and spoke at the Society's fiftieth anniversary meeting in 1925. In her speech Wintringham stated that kindergarten training had made her 'more ready to serve in the House of Commons than she would otherwise have been' (cited in Anon 1925a, p.42). Although audience and occasion need to be taken into account evidence showed that she maintained connections with the Froebel Society, for example, chairing a session in the 1936 Froebel Society series on the ten year plan for which Astor lectured. Wintringham's advocacy for nursery education continued into the 1930s, shown in her work with Astor; after losing her



seat in parliament in 1924 she accepted a Vice-Presidency of the NSA and was also on the Council of the New Education Fellowship in the 1930s (New Education Fellowship, 1937), suggesting a more general interest in new pedagogy.

Parliamentary lobbying by these women failed to overcome entrenched views of maternal responsibility, despite their considerable social, cultural and economic capital (Brehony 2009b). Patriarchal conceptions of maternal duty, reinforced by economic realities and post-war political requirements to provide jobs for returning heroes, proved stronger than the concerns of Froebelians.

## **5. Froebelians and the Inspectorate**

Board of Education policy was implemented in schools and training colleges by HMIs, thus, appointment to the Inspectorate offered possibilities for the promotion of Froebelian pedagogy; however, women inspectors faced obstacles in making their voice heard (Martindale 1938). The Board's history of the Inspectorate presented Morant's developments, implemented in 1905, as an improvement to women's status in the Board of Education Report (Board of Education, 1924). The claim that he supported feminist aspirations (Sutherland 1972) is questionable (Goodman and Harrop 2000). Although women inspectors of training colleges for women had complete responsibility, dissatisfaction expressed publicly and within the Civil Service by university educated women who inspected infant schools went unacknowledged (Lawton and Gordon 1987; Goodman and Harrop 2000). Their work was determined by male Divisional Inspectors to whom they were subservient (Martindale 1938). Edmund Holmes' proposal that Katherine Bathurst should have her own division was rejected by Morant; he regarded designation of women as Junior Inspectors regrettable, as it suggested promotion opportunities which were not intended. Morant's aim for the new post of Chief Woman Inspector [CWI] in 1905 was couched in a discourse of separate spheres: to 'secure...that what might be called the woman's aspect of Education in every grade, and the needs of girls and women in all kinds of Education are adequately realised and borne in mind' (Morant, Board of

Education, 1909, p.2). In his view 'men's knowledge and perceptions frequently cannot be adequate' (ibid); infant schoolchildren required inspection not solely from 'the intellectual and book-learning aspect' but also from 'the maternal and physical aspect' (Morant, Board of Education, 1904, p.2) and specifically linked this to concerns surrounding physical deterioration.

In view of contemporary maternalist politics (Allen 1982), women faced a 'maternal dilemma' in constructing an alternative 'womanhood' (Allen 2005). Froebelians, as teachers, inspectors and trainers of teachers, articulated their claim for professional expertise as equal but different to male colleagues, which reflected Froebelian conceptions of 'spiritual motherhood' developed in the nineteenth century (Allen 1982), in particular by Froebel's great-niece, Henriette Schrader Breymann (Read 2003). Morant recognised that women inspectors met difficulties in their work and acknowledged that this was 'not only – perhaps not so much – by the women themselves as by the men under whom they have been placed' (Morant, Board of Education, 1904, p.1). Strategies of exclusion operated to marginalise female colleagues; invitations were not extended to conferences where policy was discussed (Board of Education, 1923), nor were they represented on committees on equal basis to men (Lawton, op.cit; Goodman and Harrop, op.cit). C.W.I. Maude Lawrence shared Morant's conceptualisation of a separate role for women Inspectors reflecting gendered views of spheres of interest and activity; instead of offering a challenge, Lawrence constrained aspirations to equal opportunity and pay for many years, including in her later role in the Treasury (Zimneck 1988).

Women inspectors were often more highly qualified in comparison to their male colleagues, perhaps reflecting more limited opportunities for employment (Hunt 1991), but their problems were not quickly resolved. The situation which Bathurst et al experienced early in the period, whereby their reports were filtered through Divisional Inspectors (Board of Education, 1905), was faced by the women who were later appointed to inspect nursery schools. Henry Richards, Senior Chief Inspector of Schools, stated that the Inspectors 'specially allocated' for this new sphere of activity will 'act in the closest co-operation with the District Inspector, *through whom all recommendations dealing with the administration or provision will come*' (Richards, Board of Education, 1919, emphasis added). Alice

Wark, successor to Lawrence, wrote to Richards in 1923, regarding isolation of women inspectors, disregard for their work and exclusion from Divisional Conferences (Board of Education, 1923). Richards proposed discussion of the issue at a conference of Divisional Inspectors because '[i]t is quite obvious that scope must be found for women of this kind...they cannot be retained for ever in a position of permanent subordination' (Richards, Board of Education, 1923). By 1931, the Board granted female HMIs some independence of action, permitting visits to schools as they saw fit and freedom to submit a report, to the Chief Woman Inspector, or not (Board of Education, 1931). However, just as incorporation of infant schools with junior departments led to loss of posts for women infant school head teachers, so reform of the Inspectorate, following the Royal Commission on the Civil Service, chaired by Lord Tomlin in 1929, led to reduction in women inspectors, including higher-ranking officers, and confirmation of their lesser status in the years up to 1939. This was despite the Commission's advocacy of a policy of 'fair field and no favour' (Martindale 1938, p.101). Informal male networks continued to restrict women Inspectors; Mr Hankin, (Board of Education Inspectors' Association), noted in his evidence to the Tomlin Commission:

As things are at present it is very much easier for men, than it is for a woman, to go and smoke a pipe with the director of education and discuss matters with him in an informal way...The pipe...is a symbol of the sort of way one does discuss matters with the director, and of the psychology (cited in Goodman and Harrop 2000, p.148)

## **5.1 Froebelian women HMIs**

Women active in the Froebel movement were appointed as HMIs for schools and training colleges. For some, active roles as Froebelians followed their work as inspectors; for others, appointment as HMIs required resignation from the Froebel Society Council, as in the case of Miss M. Hill in 1915 (Froebel Society. Minutes X, 14th October 1915), and Brown Smith in 1921. Following Brown Smith's 'enforced retirement' the Society requested that she represent the Board on the Council. (Froebel Society. Minutes XI, 9<sup>th</sup> June 1921). The Society had asked the Board of Education to appoint two

representatives on its Council in 1910. In an informal reply, P. A. Barnett, Chief Inspector, told the Council that he did not think the Board would do so (Froebel Society. Minutes, Vol. X, 19<sup>th</sup> May 1910). In 1921 the Society received a formal notice 'refusing to allow Miss Brown Smith, HMI, to serve on any committee' (Froebel Society. Minutes XI, 13<sup>th</sup> October 1921).

#### **5.1.1 Inspection of infants: Louisa Callis, Rosalie Munday and Katherine Bathurst**

On April 1<sup>st</sup> 1904 five women HMIs began investigations into attendance in elementary schools by children under five (Board of Education, 1905). Their reports made a significant contribution to the deliberations of the 1908 Consultative Committee on whether children under five should attend elementary schools. References to Froebelian pedagogy, reflecting revisionist conceptions, were evident throughout the five reports, but also revealed differences in conceptions of professional role which were articulated more sharply in the 1908 report. Louisa Callis worked briefly at Stockwell College from 1891-1897 as Mistress of Method before joining the Elementary Division of the Inspectorate. After retirement she joined the Froebel Society Council and served on the Finance Committee during the 1920s. In her report she rejected work with small sticks, beads and threads, proposing instead the use of blocks 'larger than [those] in Froebel's "Gifts"' for group work on the floor (ibid, p.100). She approved some Froebelian occupations, such as sand-work, clay-modelling and ball games, but proposed that drawing should be on blackboards and slates rather than on graph paper, as Froebel suggested. Callis claimed that supplementary teachers, who were unqualified, 'led by instinct' and most often achieved good results (ibid, p.105); in contrast, certificated teachers expected too much of young children. Callis's support for a role for untrained teachers of young children founded solely on qualities of motherliness in her report represented a challenge to Froebelian advocacy of high status grounded in professional training.

Rosalie Munday's career in the Inspectorate lasted from 1896 to retirement in 1921. Munday rejected procedures for using the Gifts as outdated, arguing that Froebel's Gifts had been supplanted by a variety of excellent toys and games, which Froebel would have used in their stead. She criticised

schools which followed 'the *letter* of Froebellian [sic] teaching and not his spirit' (ibid, p.31-32). Echoing contemporary imperialist rhetoric, Munday criticised school design, including new buildings, which excluded the sun and placed windows high up in the walls: 'Hundreds, nay thousands of the children of this sunny realm of England, children belonging to an empire on which the sun never sets, are condemned to spend their school days in rooms in which the sun never shines' (ibid, p.22). Munday commented on the 'rather remarkable' lack of teachers holding the higher Froebel Certificate or trained at the Froebel Educational Institute [FEI] (ibid, p.5). However, in her view headmistresses feared 'they would be unable to cope with large numbers, would not understand the routine of an elementary school, and would therefore be unable to take the children through the school from babies to Standard I inclusive on all subjects provided on the Time Table' (ibid). Despite her comment on Froebel-trained teachers, Munday, like Callis, undermined Froebelian arguments for well-trained teachers, suggesting that there were 'hundreds of young girls, bright, fond of children and teaching' who rejected teacher-training because of the examinations but would make 'ideal baby-minders' for three to five year olds with just a few months training (ibid, p.33).

Of the five reports, Katherine Bathurst's critique was the most devastating; although the Board printed her report it was heavily edited and annotated, possibly by Morant, with a preliminary note questioning its accuracy (ibid, p. 35). As a consequence she was forced to resign (Gordon 1988; Gordon 2004). At the root of Bathurst's critique was an attack on male inspectors who did not understand the needs of small children. Instead of encouraging individuality and spontaneity 'little children are subjected to military rather than maternal influences' which 'leads eventually to intellectual stagnation (Board of Education, 1905, p.46). All four of Bathurst's colleagues shared her criticisms, albeit framed in less provocative language. Indeed, Gorst advised her not to resign until she had written her report because '[i]f you go, we shall have a milk and water report by Miss Munday & Co. saying all is for the best in this best of worlds, with which all our efforts and all our statements will be smothered' (Gorst, cited in Gordon 1988, p.201).

Central to Bathurst's critique was use of language by teachers suggesting Froebelian principles, but detached from the spirit of his practice. She recorded aversion to hearing teachers' use of such expressions as "developing the spontaneous activity of the child" (Board of Education, 1905, p.44). Although Froebel's gifts were found in nearly every elementary school 'the knowledge of how to use them is exceedingly rare' (ibid); as a consequence Froebel pedagogy 'gets a bad name' (ibid), and she expressed the view that teachers and inspectors required kindergarten training. Implicit in Bathurst's argument was a critique of Kekewich's Circular 322, with its impact on practice in the absence of adequate training. Like Callis and Munday, her conception of professional role dispensed with certificated teachers; instead she proposed a certificate combining 'the qualifications and experience of a hospital nurse with that of a Froebel certificate' (ibid, p.59) which would be of equal rank to certificated teachers and recognised by the Board of Education. No response to this has been located but it was unlikely to meet with Froebelian approval.

Chief Inspector Cyril Jackson's Introductory Memorandum asserted the women inspectors were in 'complete unanimity that the children between the ages of three and five get practically no intellectual advantage from school instruction' (ibid, p.i). This disingenuous statement ignored the possibility that children might gain intellectual advantage if 'instruction' was replaced by exploration and activity. Drawing on their views of teacher qualities and training he asserted 'general agreement that the best informed teacher is not necessarily the best baby-minder' (ibid, p.iii). Jackson could not fail to be cognisant of recent child study theory, or of earlier proponents of the learning potential of young children, not least Froebel. Yet connotations of the terms 'baby' and 'minder' undermined the developmental significance of the period from three to five, and the role of teachers of that age group. However, the financial implications of recognising its significance may have constrained Jackson, as it did later officials such as H.A.L. Fisher in implementing nursery schools.

### **5.1.2 Inspection of nursery schools: M. Hill, M.C.L. Greaves and Alice Skillicorn**

Misses M. Hill, M.C.L. Greaves and Alice Skillicorn served as Inspectors for nursery schools in the Metropolitan, Eastern and North East Divisions, respectively. Greaves worked with the Froebelian Grace Owen at Mather Training College prior to her appointment (Johnson 1968). Skillicorn, who independently submitted evidence to the 1933 CC, subsequently became Principal of Homerton College in 1935. Greaves and Skillicorn were active Froebelians after retirement. In 1931 they were asked, with HMIs covering the remaining Divisions, to study nursery schools and nursery classes (Board of Education, 26<sup>th</sup> March 1931). The inspectors were to report on essential requirements for nursery provision, crucially 'upon the price at which these can be achieved' (ibid). Provision of schools or classes was an area of significant debate (Palmer 2011), leading to dispute between McMillan and NSA colleagues and her resignation as President in 1929 (NSA, 1944). Conferences organised for the HMIs covered medical and educational aspects, the latter addressed by Froebelian Henrietta Brown Smith, and visits to nursery schools. The findings trod a neutral line, but implicit criticism of nursery classes may be seen in comments on differing interpretations of what was 'adequate and suitable' (Board of Education, 1936). This represents a significant example of Froebelian HMIs contributing to a contested area of policy formulation for nursery education.

### **5.1.3 A Froebelian HMI of training colleges: Rose Monkhouse**

Rose Monkhouse, OBE, was inspector of women's teacher-training colleges from 1910 and staff inspector, following Alice Wark's promotion to CWI. Monkhouse's role brought her into contact with Esther Lawrence at FEI. She suggested staff for lectureships and recommended Lillian de Lissa, Head of Gipsy Hill Training College and Chairman of the NSA, as Principal on Lawrence's retirement in 1931 (Johnson 1968). Following her own retirement Monkhouse became Educational Adviser to the NFU in 1935 and NFU Inspector of Froebel training colleges and departments, to which role she brought her experience as HMI (Payne 1945). Monkhouse was a key player in the structural development of the Froebel organisations; following three years of Froebel Council membership she became first Director

of the NFF in 1938, remaining until retirement in 1943 (Johnson 1968). In developments after 1939, Monkhouse seconded the nomination of Alice Skillicorn, MSc, to the Governing Body of the NFF; however Ruth Fletcher, MA (Oxon), Senior Woman Inspector under the LCC, was elected. This shows that the NFF was able to attract numbers of well qualified women candidates with considerable experience and the status of experts in the machinery of government.

#### **5.1.4 A Froebelian Chief Woman Inspector: Alice Wark**

Alice [A.E.] Wark, C.B.E., rose from junior inspector for training colleges, appointed in 1912, to staff inspector in 1919, and then Chief Woman Inspector [CWI] in 1920, on the appointment of Maude Lawrence to the Treasury. Following retirement, Wark served on the Governing Bodies of the Incorporated Froebel Educational Institute, from 1928, and NFU, and on the IFEI Sub-committee of Management of Colet Gardens Demonstration School. Her membership of the Froebel organisations, and her particular role with regard to Colet Gardens, suggested her stance as an HMI towards education of young children may have reflected Froebelian principles, however, no written work has been located and Wark did not present evidence to the 1933 Consultative Committee which may have provided evidence of her views.

#### **5.1.5 Henrietta Brown Smith: HMI for infant and nursery schools and for training colleges**

Henrietta Brown Smith was the HMI most active in the Froebel movement. Appointed as HMI for Infant and Nursery schools in 1921, she subsequently inspected training colleges under Monkhouse. Her unwavering commitment to Froebelian pedagogy lasted from the 1890s to her death in 1944. Brown Smith gained her Teacher's Certificate at Maria Grey College in 1891 before taking an LLA at St Andrews (Payne 1945). She lectured to kindergarten students and formed a lifelong friendship with Elsie Murray, returning to Maria Grey in 1900 to take the NFU Certificate. Maria Grey was a strongly Froebelian college and Murray, head of the kindergarten training department, and the Principal, Alice Woods, were key advocates for revision of Froebelian pedagogy. Murray and Brown Smith worked



closely to rid kindergarten and infant school teaching from the 'artificial formalism and somewhat vague symbolism of the time' (Payne, op.cit., p.2). Dewey's experimental work represented for both women a sound foundation for practice (ibid); their work on modernising the NFU exam syllabuses showed evidence of this. A full account of Brown Smith's revisionist Froebelian pedagogy was articulated in *Education By Life* (1912; 1928) and in her collaboration with Murray ([1919]).

Brown Smith lectured to trainee infant teachers at Saffron Walden College and, from 1906, at Goldsmiths College where her interest in nursery schools developed (Payne 1945); she organised Saturday classes for students taking the NFU Certificate in the college demonstration nursery school. As an HMI, she travelled widely, gaining acknowledgement and renown for advisory work which drew on a capacity to analyse problems and provide constructive solutions (ibid). Her role in Froebel organisations was wide-ranging: Council member of the Society and the NFU; lecturer in London and the branches; contributor to *Child Life* and other journals on a range of topics, for example, maths for young children (1934), individual work (1921), Froebel's influence on infant schools (1937a), as well as book reviews (1937b).

Despite prohibition to remain a Council member, Brown Smith continued to communicate with the Society and the NFU. In 1922 she sought support to make permanent the Women Teachers' Federation's exhibition of individual apparatus. She wrote that *Child Life* should meet the need of rural teachers more effectively (ibid, 9<sup>th</sup> March 1922), a suggestion referred to the Propaganda Committee. The Nursery School Diploma offered by the NFU from 1931 was largely planned by her (Payne, op.cit.); here she could draw on experience of inspection of training colleges. Brown Smith rejoined the Society's Council and the NFU after her resignation in 1933. She advised on amalgamation of the two bodies in 1937, serving on the new Governing Body until shortly before her death. Her experience as an HMI was evident in areas of interest. She was co-opted on to the General Committee of the NSA where she was represented a sound Froebelian voice within a group developing an eclectic stance to practice in nursery schools (NSA. Annual Report, 1935); her inspection of infant and nursery schools may have supported her co-option. Drawing on her Froebel Society experience she urged on the NSA

the importance of summer schools 'which have become so popular and influential' (Payne, op.cit., p.3). Her interest in the vital necessity to revisit Froebelian pedagogy was shown in the project discussed in Chapter Two: 'to get together material for a Froebelian manifesto, for she felt that – as often before - Froebel's teachings needed re-statement and re-interpretation in the light of modern knowledge and developments' (ibid).

Given her commitment to Froebelian pedagogy it is incontestable that Brown Smith's professional judgements as an Inspector within schools and training colleges reflected this and permeated her advice. In 1926 the Froebel Society was approached by an unnamed HMI seeking action against government policy and requesting that the Council 'should do its utmost to educate popular opinion on the great evil contemplated by excluding the child under five from school' (Froebel Society. Minutes. XI, 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1926). The Council responded with alacrity; sending a telegram supporting the protests to the Workers Education Association meeting, drafting a letter to branches encouraging them to send written protests, and arranging the reprinting of an article on slum children published in *Child Life*. Brown Smith's continuing communication with the Society may suggest her involvement, but, regardless, the incident confirmed existence of close links between some HMIs and the Froebel Society, with potential for covert liaison.

## **6. Froebelian women inspectors in the London County Council**

Opportunities for inspection were also available for women in local education authorities, for example London had seventeen women inspectors by 1900 (Lawton 1987). When Katherine Phillips succeeded Mary Lyschinska, Instructor of Kindergarten and Mistress of Method, in 1912 her title was changed to Special Subject Inspector for Method in Infant Schools. In comparison to women HMIs, status and pay for women within the LCC inspectorate was superior (Goodman and Harrop 2000). However, Gorst advised Bathurst not to pursue a career in local authority inspection as 'male tyranny...is there worse' (Gorst, 1905, cited in Gordon, op. cit., p.206). Tensions between HMI and London inspectors were evident in Board of Education documents; Chief Inspector, F.H. Dale, gave his view of the problems of

inspection in London's elementary schools, citing the size of London and its committee which 'contains numerous members who are or think they are educational experts' (Board of Education, 27<sup>th</sup> September 1912). In 1910 the Holmes-Morant circular suggested that London inspectors impeded improvements (Holmes 1978). At the root of the critique was lack of cultural capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992); LEA inspectors were largely ex-elementary teachers lacking public school or Oxbridge education (Lawton 1987). This could not be said of the Froebelian women who became London inspectors; however, Gorst's advice suggested the complex interplay of status in the exercise of authority, a pecking-order in which women's class was subservient to gender.

A delegation calling for women to be appointed as Inspectors within the LCC met Charles Kimmins, Chief Inspector, in 1909. Brown Smith reported to the Froebel Society Council that she had pressed on him the necessity to appoint those not only with 'sympathy, but actually some knowledge and experience of children' (Froebel Society. Minutes X, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1910, original emphasis). H. Keatley Moore defended appointment of men on the grounds that they might have 'as good a knowledge of women in such a case' and urged that it would be undesirable to press 'for the appointment of women inspectors on these grounds' (ibid). This exchange exposed gendered tensions between male supporters of Froebel pedagogy, who gave time and money to the Society, and women keen to promote teaching and inspection of infant schools as areas for women's expertise. The Council resolved to ask the Propaganda Committee to do all it could 'to influence the London County Council to make proper appointments in future', especially by using personal influence on individual members of the appointments committee. This showed the determination of the Society to take an active role in lobbying for implementation of what it deemed to be appropriate policies for young children's education.

### **6.1 Two Froebelian LCC Inspectors: Gwendolen Sanson and Ruth Fletcher, Senior Woman Inspector**

Unlike HMIs, LCC inspectors were not debarred from Council membership. Gwendolen Sanson was a long-serving Inspector for Infants Methods; in 1935 Sanson, together with Senior Woman Inspector

[SWI] E. Stevenson and a male inspector, A.W.Pegrum, inspected the Burghley Infants School, under the headship of Frances Roe; their report is discussed in Chapter Seven. Sanson, with Stevenson and Philip Ballard, was a witness for the National Association of Inspectors of Schools to the 1933 Consultative Committee; as with other women inspectors, Sanson gained official recognition, with award of an MBE. During her appointment as inspector Sanson was active in the Froebel Society, as Council member and on the Policy, Evening Class and Executive committees; she was thus involved in the production of the manifesto, discussed in Chapter Two. She served as the Society's representative on the Home and School Council [HSC]; in this role she reported on matters of joint interest, as in the case of discussions with Susan Isaacs regarding publication of HSC pamphlets, one of which had been written by Isaacs for the Society (Froebel Society. Committee Minutes, vol. 4, 25th February, 28th April 1937). In 1938 she was appointed to the Governing Body of the NFF while still an inspector but died through enemy action in Bath in 1942 when the hotel she was staying in was hit (Anon 1942).

Ruth Fletcher succeeded Stevenson as SWI in 1935; like Stevenson, Fletcher had been a District Inspector. Her nomination to the NFF Governing Body in 1942 was seconded by Eglantyne Jebb, Principal of FEI (Anon 1942), suggesting she had shown interest in Froebelian pedagogy. No written statement of Fletcher's views has come to light and she did not submit evidence to the Consultative Committee.

## **7. Froebelians and nursery school policy 1918 to 1939: Circular arguments**

Following the 1918 legislation, economic recession brought opening of nursery schools to a virtual standstill. Funding was capped by successive governments under a succession of Circulars, firstly in 1921 with Circular 1190. Fisher faced deputations from many interested parties, including the Froebel Society. In correspondence with Fisher, the Froebel Society quoted his statement that young children required 'care and training, rather than instruction' (Froebel Society. April-May 1922). Board of Education papers recorded concern at the cost of nursery schools, because of their size, with forty

regarded as the optimum number of children (Board of Education, 1924). Later documents showed that this view changed on grounds of economy, supported by McMillan's model at Deptford providing for larger numbers, albeit in small groups. Concern surrounded pension implications arising from employment of staff with teacher status. A proposal was made to employ only one certificated teacher, with the title of Superintendent, in a school of forty children. The reason for this designation may have been to flag up the 'special' nature of nursery schools; whatever the reason it implied a professional role distinct from that of head teachers of schools for older children.

### **7.1 The medical model of nursery schools: Dr Janet Campbell**

Dr Janet Campbell was Senior Medical Officer in the Ministry of Health and Chief Woman Medical Adviser to the Board of Education. Campbell distinguished between nursery schools and day nurseries, noting the primacy of the educational role in the former, 'but with careful attention to health and welfare' (Board of Education, 1925). In contrast, day nurseries were staffed by 'crèche trained nurses and pupils...a kindergarten teacher is sometimes employed part-time to instruct the "toddlers"' (ibid). This characterisation of the kindergarten teacher as instructor showed limited understanding of Froebelian conceptions of professional role. Campbell proposed combining the two institutions, resulting in a nursery where 'the object would presumably be primarily the health and hygiene of the child, the training and education being secondary' (ibid). This represented Campbell's medical concerns but her solution was not pursued; it may well have elicited opposition from the Froebel Society and teachers. Subsequent discussion acknowledged that the ideal of the nursery school was to provide for the educational, medical and social welfare of the 'debilitated child' (ibid), foregrounding its educational function.

Board of Education Circular 1371 (1925), which imposed grant reduction to LEAs with the intention of removing under-fives from schools, elicited objections from the Froebel Society. Montefiore's letter to Eustace Percy, Baron Percy of Newcastle and President of the Board of Education from 1924 to 1929, pointed out that 'right conditions' did not exist in 'the average "working class" home'; stressing the importance of later stages of education without providing for three to seven year olds was 'like building

a house upon sand' (Board of Education, 1925). In 1929, the new Labour government issued Circular 1405, defining the purpose of the nursery school as providing for the 'healthy physical and mental development of children over two and under five years of age. The purpose is thus a twofold one – nurture and education' (Board of Education, 1929), thus reversing the primary focus from education to nurture. Informal discussions on nursery schools followed with representations from the NSA (Grace Owen), National Union of Teachers, Women's Co-Operative Guild, National Society of Religious Education, Manchester Education Committee; three M.P.s, including Nancy Astor, and three others, including Freda Hawtrey and Margaret McMillan. The Froebel Society was not formally represented although Owen, though Hawtrey and McMillan arguably represented the Froebelian viewpoint. In particular, Owen and McMillan stressed the need for nursery schools for two to seven year olds, deprecating the break which came at five. However, the White Paper of 1931 included further cuts in public expenditure and the early 1930s were marked by continuing refusal to permit LEAs to provide separate nursery schools. Subsequent Circulars demanded scrutiny of all programmes for under-fives and proposed that new infant schools should include provision for children from three to five; existing schools should adapt and improve existing premises and equipment (Board of Education, 1930-1933).

## **7.2 Integrated nursery-infant departments**

Following publication of Astor's *Ten Year Plan* in 1935, Freda Hawtrey and Mrs Oliver Strachie [sic; the feminist writer Ray Strachey who worked for Astor (Brehony 2009b)] visited the President of the Board to press for development of integrated nursery-infant departments. A preparatory memo characterised Hawtrey and Strachey as 'extremely formidable but not unreasonable' (Board of Education, Medical Branch, op.cit.). Hawtrey's experience of committee work, at Darlington and on the Consultative Committee, coupled with single-mindedness of purpose, gave her what Bourdieu termed 'habitus' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Hawtrey's strength of character was a feature of her role as Principal of Darlington Training College from 1912 to 1922 where she promoted Froebelian pedagogy but also integrated elements from Montessori (Stanton [1966]). Hawtrey and Strachey sought assurances from the Board for play-based methods in integrated schools; they requested that an interdepartmental

committee be consulted before 'any standard type of new school or reconstructed school is adopted' (Board of Education, 1931-36). Their visit followed publication of Circular 1444 which requested a survey of nursery school provision by LEAs, and preceded a further consultation by representatives of the NSA and NUT (NSA, 1936).

### **7.3 Policy discussions in the London County Council**

Frequent discussion of nursery provision was evident in LCC minutes in the 1930s. In 1934, S.W.I. Stevenson, Sanson and Dr E.M. McVail reported on comments received from the Consultative Committee of Head Mistresses of Infants Schools, regarding three proposed developments: nursery schools, classes and wings (LCC, 9th/10th July 1934). Following visits to Leicester and Bradford, and considering restrictions on infant school accommodation in London, the inspectors came down in favour of nursery schools. They noted the complexity of experimental combined schools in Bradford, where nursery and infant departments operated under different financial and administrative regulations. The length of the nursery school day presented danger of 'overwork' by head teachers; duties were demanding: '[w]e have been impressed by the heavy strain to which head mistresses of nursery schools are subjected by the many-sided activities of a day longer than that of the infants' school, followed often by social work in parents' clubs or by visits to the children's homes' (ibid). The importance of freedom to experiment with new methods was stressed, and they praised the work of infant school teachers:

We recognise fully that in London the advance towards a broader and more psychological conception of the education of little children is largely due to the insight and enthusiasm of teachers in infants' schools, many of whom have given unstintingly of time, money and energy to reforming the infants' departments (ibid)

The requirement for special training was emphasised, in line with Froebelian conceptions of professional role, otherwise a 'wrong standard of values' could be established by teachers seeking to

implement formal teaching. The qualities exhibited by the best teachers were 'experience coupled with the right temperament' (ibid) but special training would help teachers to gain a fresh perspective. The inspectors stated that staff conditions of service should be reconciled to facilitate movement between the different departments, with training provided for those infant teachers who wished to work in nursery schools. They firmly rejected the appointment of untrained helpers for any post of responsibility, citing McMillan's 'Free Lance' course for those girls who wished to work with young children but who lacked teaching qualifications. Although maternalist rhetoric led some Froebelians to argue against certificated teachers, as in the 1905 report by women HMIs, Froebelians for the most part rejected the view that any woman or girl was fitted for work with young children. Marjorie Wise summed up the argument in 1932 as 'it doesn't matter, they only teach the babies' (1932); however, lack of a fully unified Froebelian voice on professional status undermined the argument for highly-qualified staff for three to six year-olds as policy was being developed. This shows how the tensions between motherliness and professional status achieved through training remained a tension throughout the period.

## **8. Conclusion**

This chapter has shown how Froebelians developed the lobbying strategies they had begun in the nineteenth century by pursuing relationships to ensure their voice was heard in government policy-making circles in the period from 1900 to 1939. This was an important period for the development of policy on nursery schools and the re-structuring of elementary education, leading to the conception of nursery-infant and junior schools. The Froebel Society extended invitations to key figures to join its Council, to serve as President and to address members at annual meetings. Some of these efforts met with success but, as in the period before 1900, imperialist agendas for a physically-fit and manually-skilled workforce may have played a role, as in the case of Morant. Astor's and Wintringham's election to parliament provided a conduit for those advocating for nursery schools. Astor seems to have had few direct dealings with the Society but was in contact with Froebelians in the NSA. Despite Wintringham's Froebel training and Council membership she declined to serve as the Society's



President but took on other roles, as Vice-President and occasional speaker and chair of meetings. Their interests in nursery schools suggested the NSA was more a more appropriate arena for activity; in contrast, the Froebel Society's interests were wider, with increasing attention on junior schooling.

Evidence has also shown how Froebelian women developed careers as HMIs and local government inspectors. Within the Inspectorate vested male interests inhibited women's independence throughout the period. The blow dealt to the prospects of university educated Inspectors seeking wider responsibility by Morant's formation of the Women Inspectorate in 1905 was not overcome. Maude Lawrence used her role as CWI to maintain the gendered status quo. This showed that no assumptions could be made regarding a unified 'women's voice' on issues concerning the education of young children. Agreement on the necessity for nursery education and for qualified teachers for young children could not be taken for granted. Diverse opinions were expressed on what training was required for those working with young children; in this respect Froebelians themselves did not speak with one voice. Munday and Callis, amongst others, suggested minimal training was required, providing support for those driving policy in that direction. Association of teaching of young children with 'motherly' qualities linked with conceptions of 'spiritual motherhood', as expressed by early followers of Froebel; this view of professional role was not solely used by those suggesting only minimal training was required; it underpinned a call for gender equality and opportunity based on difference articulated as a basis for policy.

For many women few details of their careers seem to have survived. An example discussed here was E. Stevenson; although her name recurred in documentation and she was a member of the NSA, no account of her work seems to have been written. This exemplified the difficulty of tracing the impact of influential women. Where accounts of lives have been written they have not always focused on aspects relevant to this thesis, as was the case until recently with Nancy Astor. Investigating her work for nursery schools required extensive searching in archives for letters, records of deputations and other evidence of lobbying. Accounts which have been written showed that personal characteristics enabled women to resist gendered power relations employed to shape women's contributions. Few

women pursued their principles to the extent of Kitty Bathurst. Others, more politically astute, negotiated these complex power relations more successfully, as was the case with Maude Lawrence. Of the women discussed in this chapter who most overtly espoused Froebelian pedagogy, Henrietta Brown Smith stands out as the most successful. A key revisionist, she based her interpretation on continuing re-assessment re-articulation of Froebelian principles. Her career path and its longevity ensured Froebelian pedagogy was aired in policy-making forums across the period.

Policy development was not matched by provision because of on-going financial constraints; articulation of principles continued nonetheless. Froebelians contributed to this, as in the case of Brown Smith and Freda Hawtrey. Hawtrey's involvement showed how Froebelian views were conveyed by those in the wider movement. Following the Consultative Committee's 1933 report, discussion principally concerned organisation of nursery provision rather than its content; the Froebel Society did not appear to have taken an active role in these discussions. Nonetheless, Committee Minutes showed continuing concern for this area, with a lecture series in 1936 involving Astor and Wintringham. In their 1939 report, Agnes Dawson, Chair of the LCC Special Services Sub-Committee and Thomas Jones, Chair of the Elementary Education Sub-Committee, concluded that nursery schools achieved better results than nursery classes in promoting healthy development of young children needing special nurture, but nursery classes were a more economical form of provision. They identified three functions of nursery provision. Firstly, medical work, required to address the physical needs of the child; secondly, educational work, and, thirdly, social work with families. Dawson and Jones also alluded to those who argued for nursery schools for all on the grounds that they were educationally desirable for all children over the age of two. This was a new note in the debate as far as state-provision was concerned although it underpinned the conception of the Froebelian kindergarten. However, Dawson and Jones concurred with the generally accepted view that nursery provision should be reserved for those areas where need was greatest, showing that the rationale for nursery provision had not changed since the beginning of the period. The argument for combined nursery-infant schools may be seen to reflect Froebelian views of the need for a unified approach for education for young children but Dawson and Jones drew on the health needs of infant school children rather than

educational consistency. In conclusion, Froebelian views on nursery education, and the form it should take, were conveyed to policy-makers and, to some extent, were reflected in discussion documents but the economic situation dictated that this was not a period for firm decision-making. Froebelians were involved in implementing policy for teaching in infant and nursery schools through their roles as inspectors. Chapter Six shows how Froebelians were also implementing policy as teachers in the state sector. The following chapter discusses how Froebelians participated in another arena for policy development, the Consultative Committee investigations of 1908 and 1933.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Froebelians, Policy-Making and Implementation: The Consultative Committee**

#### **1. Introduction**

Between 1900 and 1939 education for young children was investigated on three occasions by the Board of Education's Consultative Committee which was formed as part of the reorganisation leading to the creation of the Board in 1899. The Committee looked into school attendance by children below the age of five (Board of Education, 1908), the primary school (Board of Education, 1931) and infant and nursery schools (Board of Education, 1933). Drawing on analysis of membership of the Consultative Committee [CC], witness evidence taken, and other memoranda, the chapter shows the channels through which Froebelian pedagogy was conveyed to the Committee. It pays particular attention to how witness evidence was reported and considers reception of the reports by Froebelians and the LCC, as a major provider of nursery and infant education.

Despite promotion of combined nursery and infant schools by Froebelians and unions such as the National Union of Women Teachers, the 1930s saw a different trend in amalgamation of infant and junior departments. Froebelians increasingly focused on junior schooling, possibly because the NSA had gained prominence in advocating for nursery schools. The focus of this thesis is on nursery and infant schools; consequently, this chapter principally discusses the reports of 1908 and 1933. However, Froebelians submitted evidence for the Committee's investigations of primary education and this chapter briefly discusses how its report framed its findings in language reflecting Froebelian principles.

The potential of the CC to effect policy change has been questioned, and its early period of activity regarded as lacking status (Selleck 1972; Kogan 1974; Simon 1974; Hunt 1991; Brehony 1994). Although Committee members were representative of the educational spectrum, Selleck argues: 'in the first two decades of its existence, though it worked assiduously and produced a number of important reports, it caused the Board few headaches' (Selleck, op.cit., p.133). As the Board of Education set terms of reference, parameters for the inquiries could be manipulated. Careful choice of Committee members could weed out potentially unsuitable candidates (Selleck, op. cit.). However, solicited advice was not always taken, as in Morant's choice of Isabel Cleghorn in 1907 (Brehony 1994). Seeking assurance that she would act in a 'reasonable manner', Morant ignored reports of her anti-government stance at union meetings, including against HMIs. This shows how particular agendas drove decisions; her selection fulfilled Morant's intentions for representation on the Committee of the National Union of Teachers [NUT]. Given that it functioned as a *consultative* body the Board could set aside the Committee's recommendations, thus rendering it ineffective as an agent of change; nevertheless, findings presented in its reports fed into contemporary debate and became a basis for subsequent discussion.

## **2. Committee representation: an open or a closed door for Froebelians?**

Increasing use of experts in this period framed Morant's and other Board officials' choices for CC membership. Morant's selection of two NUT representatives met that agenda, but contemporary antagonism between teachers and the Board made it desirable on diplomatic grounds alone. Further groups targeted for representation were organised labour and feminist women (Brehony 1994). Despite the CC's investigation of education for children under five in 1908, infant teachers were not represented on the committee, although they were experts in the field. This reflected a gender imbalance which continued throughout the period. The average number of women members was between four and five, with six in the preparation of the Hadow reports of 1931 and 1933. This was out of a total membership of eighteen at the outset, when there were just three women members, and

twenty one from 1907. Following reconstitution of the CC in 1920, the Board of Education did not take the opportunity to increase women's membership (Harrop 2000). However, the appointment of Lady Galway in 1928 reflected perceived benefits of a woman member from outside the teaching profession who could represent the welfare interests of young children in the Committee's forthcoming enquiries (Harrop, op.cit.) Galway held a number of positions of relevance, as board member of the Hospital for Sick Children and Chair of the Committee of the Mothercraft Training Society (ibid), both of particular relevance for the report into nursery and infant schools. Despite low numbers, women members were hardly minnows. Their calibre and inter-professional and social links provided them with what Bourdieu called *habitus* (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), deflecting gendered hierarchies between male and female members (Harrop 2000). Harrop argues that women 'were regarded as professionals equal in expertise to their male counterparts' (ibid, p.162).

Memos suggested that what constituted 'suitability' was based on an assessment of experience, particular interests, geographical location and personal qualities of fairness and equity in assessing the issue at stake (Board of Education, 1907). Discussions about suitability also took place about witnesses. The chairman of the Committee, Arthur Dyke Acland, sought Morant's advice as to which of the five women inspectors who reported in 1905 might be suitable witnesses for the inquiry in 1907-08. Morant dismissed Miss Heale as 'in many respects unsuitable on personal grounds' and Miss Harrington as 'ineffective' (Board of Education, 1907, 19th June). He strongly recommended Rosalie Munday and Louisa Callis. Of Katharine Bathurst, Morant stated 'the cleverest, by far, of the five is Miss Bathurst, and if due allowance could be made for her entire want of any sense of proportion, very useful points could be elicited from her in oral evidence' (ibid). This seemed surprising given Morant's hand in Bathurst's resignation (Gordon 1988); his appointment of Cleghorn showed his idiosyncratic stance and his description of the troublesome Bathurst may suggest he recognised her qualities despite the difficulties she caused. Alternatively, he had other motivations which her involvement might advance. The emphasis on *oral* evidence may be significant, given it had not been possible to suppress her written memoranda in 1905 and publication aroused much press coverage (Gordon 1988); oral evidence may have proved easier to edit.

Morant's independence of action showed how an individual with a particular agenda, in his case to modernise Board procedures still mired in patronage, might effect change within a complex bureaucratic structure; indeed Brehony argues that he 'above all, shaped the policy which determined the Consultative Committee's composition, a policy that it retained throughout the period of its existence' (1994, p171). As Archer suggests, far from being a monolithic structure with 'infrastructural determinism', education is 'fundamentally about what people have wanted of it and have been able to do to it' (1984, p.1).

### **3. Consultative Committee on the School Attendance of Children under Five, 1908**

The Committee was given its terms of reference in 1907 at a time when under-fives were being excluded from infant schools in rapidly increasing numbers. In 1900-01, 615,507 children aged three to five were attending school in England and Wales, 43.1% of the total of that age group. By 1910-11 this figure had fallen to 350,591, representing 22.7% (Board of Education, 1933, p.29). This decline may have been attributable to the findings of the 1905 report by the women inspectors and the Code which followed, permitting LEAs to exclude children under five. Chief Inspector Cyril Jackson's prefatory comments to their report were criticised by the 1908 CC as going beyond what the reports suggested. The CC noted that Dr Newsholme, Medical Officer to the Local Government Board and a witness to the Committee, had drawn on Jackson's summary, and a statement in the Board's *Suggestions for Teachers* that 'formal teaching, even by means of Kindergarten occupations, is undesirable for children under five' (Board of Education, 1905), to conclude that 'the educational uselessness of school attendance under five years of age may therefore be regarded as officially endorsed' (Board of Education, 1908, p.36). In the Committee's view, this ignored the impact of home conditions and inappropriate teaching methods in infant schools. The CC's purpose was to investigate the desirability of this exclusion, 'both on educational and other grounds' (Board of Education, 1905, p.11); it noted that money saved would still be payable to local authorities for education of children of compulsory

school age. At this time, provision of services differed from one local education authority [LEA] to another. Brown Smith (1908, p.804-05) wrote that what was lacking was a 'common administrative principle'. Morant's prefatory note referred to the importance of the issue both for children and for the community; his experience of work in Toynbee Hall probably gave him direct experience of the problems of the families who would be affected by withdrawal of under-five provision (Fry 2004). In seeking as much information as possible the Board sanctioned investigations of practice overseas, undertaken by two Froebelians: Miss M. Synge, in Belgium and France, and Miss Maude May, in Germany and Switzerland; May was appointed following the death of a male HMI, T. Darlington, who died before writing up his material.

### **3.1 Membership of the 1908 Consultative Committee**

Of twenty-one CC members in 1908 only four were women, a composition which by no means adequately reflected the gender balance of the teaching profession most involved in the education of children under five. One member, Lydia Manley, Head of Stockwell Training College, was on the Froebel Society Council; she was involved in discussions concerning a new NFU syllabus intended to meet the needs of serving infant school teachers with limited time for study. Manley drew up a syllabus and played a key role in organising the Society's 1899 conference which addressed the issue of infant teachers and Froebel training; she took over as chair of the organising committee when Rev T.W. Sharpe, pulled out through illness. Subsequently, she had interviews with Kekewich and with Lyulph Stanley of the London School Board, which was proposing a similar conference (Froebel Society. Minutes VIII, Jan 16<sup>th</sup>, Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> 1899). Manley had given evidence to the Cross Commission in 1886, so had experience of what it was like for women to be subject to formal interview (Harrop 2000). Of her female colleagues on the committee, Sophie Bryant, (North London Collegiate School), and Eleanor Sidgwick (National Union of Women Workers) had served on the Bryce Commission (Harrop, op.cit.). These women had resources of class and status which may have helped to them to negotiate with male colleagues (Archer 1988).



Albert Mansbridge represented the labour movement (Brehony 1994) and may well have been sympathetic to the arguments in favour of nursery education, given his connection with Margaret McMillan (Mansbridge 1932). Harry Reichel had been associated with the Sloyd Training School at Naas, Norway since 1896. Proponents of Sloyd shared with some Froebelians (Lord 1888; Marenholtz-Bülow [1883]) an interest in the manual training aspect of educational handwork, which met some contemporary views of the purpose of education for working class children (Brehony 1998). Reichel read a paper on educational handwork at the 1903 Annual Meeting of the Froebel Society (Reichel 1903) and affiliation of the societies was discussed in the period up to the 1920s.

### **3.2 Conduits for Froebelian pedagogy**

The Committee consulted a number of representatives of professions and organizations as well as individuals. Its rationale for selection was 'solely on the grounds of their position and experience' (Board of Education, 1908, p.61). Seven male medical officers were consulted and evidence taken from three Inspectors, with Rosalie Munday the only female. Five teachers gave evidence, including one male and two married women. Mrs Kemp, (Glusburn Council School, Keighley), was listed as a member of the Bradford & District Branch (Froebel Society, 1908, p.16). Mrs Shaw taught in infant schools in London and established a reputation for innovatory practice based on Froebelian pedagogy; this is discussed in Chapter Seven.

Organisations which presented evidence included the National Society of Day Nurseries [NSDN]. Its secretary, Miss Cecil Henland [Mrs Percival], stressed that the opinions in the summary were her own, not necessarily those of her Society (Board of Education, 1908); London County Council nurses were represented by their Superintendent, Miss Pearse. The views of working class parents were also sought, albeit indirectly from the Director of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. As noted in Chapter Three, the Froebel Society was not invited to present evidence, however Morant met a deputation in 1905 which conveyed the Society's views; these were that the Board should improve conditions in infant schools, and employ trained kindergarten teachers (Froebel Society. GPC Minutes, 1905). All the same, failure to formally include evidence from the Society was

surprising, if not remarkable, given the CC's remit was investigate the desirability of children's attendance on 'educational or other grounds'; the Society was the sole organisation concerned with the education of this age group and had moved beyond its middle class roots. Froebelians such as Lucy Latter (Invicta Road, London) and Mrs Shaw (Church Road, Hackney; Haselrigge, Clapham) were practising Froebelian pedagogy in infants schools, supported by Katharine Phillips as Superintendent of Method in Infant Schools for the London School Board. Further, as previously shown, Morant was a close ally of McMillan who was articulating her own pedagogy in strongly Froebelian terms at this time (McMillan 1895; McMillan 1899). In addition, Froebelians were active in establishing Free Kindergartens in London, thus were eminently suitable as witnesses. However, a conduit existed for their views in Lydia Manley, on the committee, and witnesses, such as infant teachers Shaw and Kemp, and Grace Owen, at this point lecturer at Victoria University, Manchester and in charge of a training class at the Manchester Day Training College for infant school teaching. Nevertheless, the CC's failure to grant the Society a formal voice must have been disappointing to members..

All early oral evidence favoured retention of young children in school, a policy supported by many LEAs and based on reports taking into account inquiries by medical officers. The Committee acknowledged that disagreement existed, on educational and medical grounds, and specifically invited witnesses to present dissenting views: Dr Newsholme, three (male) representatives of LEA's which excluded young children (Southampton, Newcastle and Barrow), and two (male) Clerks of the Edinburgh and Glasgow school boards with three (female) teachers.

### **3.3 Reports by Froebelians on overseas provision:**

Although the Froebel Society was not consulted for the main body of the Report, Part Four of the Report looked at provision made in Europe; this section made considerable reference to Froebel kindergartens and similar settings in Belgium, France, Germany and Switzerland, including training schemes at the Pestalozzi-Froebel House in Berlin, for nursery-maids in Frankfurt and kindergarten teachers in Zürich. Miss M. Synge reported on crèches and écoles gardiennes and jardins d'enfants in Belgium and France, including teacher training, staffing and duties of staff. Synge wrote a series of

articles in *Child Life* in 1907 on the education of young children and also contributed children's stories (Synge 1907). May's report on kindergartens and crèches in Germany and Switzerland noted greater flexibility, in use of classroom space through movable tables and chairs, as against fixed benches, and a less rigid timetable. She also pointed to greater use of outdoor work and free play, and close relationships between children and teacher. May commented on the attention paid to training for the care of young children, which included nurses and nursery governesses and a special class of teacher; this work was supervised by women inspectors. The appendices included detailed information of costs, plans of buildings, rules for admission to kindergartens, specimen timetables and details of training courses, including from the Pestalozzi-Froebelhaus in Berlin. May's report in particular ensured that a strong Froebelian tenor was present in the report, albeit in connection with overseas practice.

### **3.4 A new kind of school: nursery schools and the Froebelian free kindergarten**

The Committee recorded objections to provision of nursery schools for under-fives, and prefaced its remarks by the oft-repeated mantra 'the proper place for a child between three and five is, of course, at home with its mother' (Board of Education, 1908, p.57). Nevertheless, it proposed three key benefits to nursery schools, moral, physical and mental, and made recommendations for the 'ideal institution for younger infants' in four areas: premises, curriculum, apparatus and staff. A striking similarity to rhetoric employed in free kindergarten literature emerged from close reading, although no representative from these new institutions, which began to open in 1900, gave evidence to the committee. Pedagogy in a free kindergarten, which opened in Notting Dale, London, in the year of the report's publication and in a voluntary nursery school which opened two years later near St Pancras is discussed in Chapter Seven.

### 3.4.1 Moral, physical and mental advantages

An explicit critique of working class *mores* underpinned arguments made by witnesses for the moral advantages of nursery schools; indeed, this was presented as one of the most important advantages of schools for this age group (Read 2006c). In removing children from what the Report called the 'dangers and temptations' of the street into cleaner and 'more wholesome' surroundings (Read 2010a) they could be taught to be 'truthful, kindly and honest; to be cleanly and tidy in their persons; to be disciplined and obedient in their habits' (Board of Education, 1908, p.24). These arguments were hardly new; they underpinned the nurturing and disciplinary benefits extolled by Robert Owen and later proponents of infant schools such as Samuel Wilderspin, David Goyder, *inter alia* (Wilderspin 1832; Owen 1969; Clarke 1985). They were repeated in articulations of the rationale for infant schools by Thomas Huxley of the London School Board (School Board for London. Minutes 1, 1870-71). Witnesses suggested that teachers served as role models, giving poor children lessons supplied by the superior home life of more fortunate children. Mrs Kemp argued '[a]ttendance of children at school is a means indirectly of helping to educate parents' (Board of Education, 1908, p.95). Mrs Shaw made the point that '[t]he fact that children are going to school causes the mother to take more trouble in making them clean and tidy', even if this was only on schooldays (*ibid*, p.100). Munday argued that '[a]s a general rule...her experience showed that ... children from slum areas... are *physically and morally* infinitely better under control' (*ibid*, p.88, original emphasis). Educating parents, notably but not solely mothers, was directly addressed by the founders of free kindergartens opening at this time (Read 2006a). Froebel's description of duties of teachers at his Blankenburg kindergarten also addressed educating parents in the care of their children (Froebel 1842). Kemp differentiated between treatment of younger children and older infants but her agenda was clear: '[d]iscipline, as understood in the upper school, can have no place in the babies' classes, but the babies can be taught to be obedient' (Board of Education, 1908, p.96). Walter Roberts, headmaster of Steventon Church School, Berkshire, took this further, extolling nursery schools as preparation for the didactic teaching which followed: '[t]hey

can be trained in habits of obedience, punctuality, tidiness, and cleanliness, which makes them more fit to receive such instruction later on' (ibid., p.98).

Descriptions of the physical benefits of nursery school attendance stressed the importance of routines such as regular mealtimes and opportunities for sleep (ibid., p.25); it also facilitated detection of early onset of disease, and sight and hearing problems. Opponents of this view pointed out the deleterious effects of attendance in existing infant schools, due to factors identified by the women inspectors in 1905: poor ventilation, lack of light and over-crowding. In these conditions infectious diseases could rapidly spread; however, the report pointed out that the new kind of school envisaged by discussants would address these deficiencies (Read, 2006b).

The report criticised the 'overworking' of children in infant schools; teaching methods adopted in nursery schools would be more suitable for young children than those used in the babies' classes which harmed children's development. The answer was not to exclude the child but to improve the method, a riposte to Jackson's summary of the 1905 report. However, Munday concurred with Jackson's view in arguing that '[a]s a general rule...her experience showed that children who do not attend school until five years of age, whether coming from good or bad homes, are *mentally* more forward at seven than those who enter schools at three' (Board of Education, 1908, p.88). This undermined the Froebelian principle embodied in the kindergarten. In proposing nursery schools the committee report rejected Jackson's and Munday's view, drawing on arguments put forward by witnesses such as Shaw and Kemp.

#### **3.4.2 Premises, equipment and curriculum**

Kemp and Shaw couched their evidence for appropriate accommodation, resources and curriculum in Froebelian terms. They referred to the domestic ethos which should prevail; '[t]he babies' room must imitate the home as much as possible, and must not be regarded as a school at all...A kindergarten atmosphere should pervade work and play' (Shaw, ibid., p.102). Criticism levelled at institutions calling

themselves kindergartens on account of providing the Froebel Gifts had been made by Froebelians (Woods 1900). This was echoed here by Kemp: '[t]he *spirit* of the kindergarten should prevail' (Kemp, Board of Education, 1908, p.96, emphasis added). Both teachers referred to Froebel's Gifts and to Froebelian occupations: 'ball games, cube-building, modelling in wet sand or clay, digging in sand, bead and reed threading, matching and sorting, etc.' (Kemp, *ibid.*, p.96). Nature activities were stressed '[l]arge sand troughs on wheels are useful for planting seeds and flowers' (Shaw, *ibid.*, p.101); the particular value of such activities for language development was pointed out: '[t]he care of gold-fish, silkworms, doves etc, awakens interest and creates the desire to speak even in the poorest child. Seed and bulb planting and the tending of flowers bring the child into touch with nature, and afford material for language lessons' (Shaw, *ibid.*, p.102). Outdoor activities and free play, with rest periods, were to occupy half the time. James Niven, Medical Officer for Manchester, also referred to the kindergarten occupations of sand and brushwork and advocated teaching through play; he warned against 'complete kindergarten' as it could cause strain (*ibid.*, p.81). Niven's criticism was already being addressed by revisionist Froebelians who were rejecting occupations which strained eyesight and made too many demands on young children's fine motor skills. Of the two LCC Medical Officers, Dr James Kerr had worked with Margaret McMillan in Bradford; this may have influenced his view of an appropriate curriculum in which '[p]lay is the best way of educating young children – let them follow their natural instincts as in the nursery, and let this principle be carried out as far as possible in school' (*ibid.*, p.64).

### **3.4.3 Staff and training**

The importance of special training was stressed by both medical and teaching witnesses to the CC. Drs Kerr and Hogarth stated that '[t]he importance of teachers being specially trained to teach "baby classes" in accordance with such a curriculum should be borne in mind' (*ibid.*, p.61). Shaw and Kemp both specified Froebel training; Shaw argued that the qualities she advocated were also necessary for infant teachers: '[t]he teacher should be both teacher and nurse...The training should be on Froebelian lines' (*ibid.*, p.102). Munday's view again belied her Froebelian credentials and echoed her evidence in

the 1905 report: 'supplementary teachers, or even girls just leaving school, were in many cases very much better than trained teachers for babies. They are much nearer to the child's mind. What is wanted is not a person to teach; but a kind of superior nurse' (ibid, p.90). Kemp firmly rejected this argument: '[i]t is a great mistake to suppose that any teacher will do for babies; in fact the aim should be "the younger the child the better the teacher"' (ibid, p.97). This was not surprising; Munday's view undermined her own professional status. Kemp stated that the best course for trainee teachers was provided by the National Froebel Union Certificate. However, Kemp did not think this course prepared students for teaching classes of even thirty children. To address this she suggested '[t]he ideal babies' teacher would be one with a dual training covering both the Elementary Teachers' Certificate and also that of the National Froebel Union' (ibid.) Kemp went beyond Shaw, stating that all elementary teachers would benefit from Froebel training as teachers in upper schools 'do not understand the methods' used with younger children. Further, she suggested '[m]ore encouragement ought to be given to pupil teachers to take the Froebel Certificate' (ibid). Henland (NSDN) recommended use of day nurseries to provide experience in child care for girls leaving elementary schools. She argued against academic courses, proposing instead a broader and more practical basis for training: for those in day nurseries '[i]n the ordinary way a highly-educated lady would not be sent to take charge of a day nursery. The matron should be very motherly, and should be well-trained, with some knowledge of child hygiene; experience of hospital work would be very suitable' (ibid., p. 109). Pearse (LCC), speaking for nurses, argued for retention of children in schools; she agreed with Henland that attitude was more important than qualifications: '[a] highly trained teacher is not absolutely necessary. What is more important than the educational qualifications of the teacher is that she should be really in sympathy with the children, and very kind and patient' (ibid. p.119). Differing conceptions of professional role for those working with young children marked the period, reinforcing development of alternative training routes already underway at the Norland Institute, Sesame House for Home-Life Training and newer institutions such as Wellgarth Nursery Training School in north London. The view of nursery teachers as 'motherly, sympathetic, kind and patient' was not solely advocated by male politicians seeking to limit the costs of nursery schools; witness evidence, and the views of some of the women inspectors discussed in Chapter Three, showed it was a view also proposed by Froebelians.

In her evidence, Grace Owen described a two-year Certificate course at Manchester University; she advocated a two year scheme for those intending to teach in infants schools and the Lower Standards which reflected a Froebelian stance. It included science (partially to support nature study), literature (for future story-telling), history, and constructive occupations, the latter 'indispensable in the training of teachers of young children' (ibid. p.111). The second year included modern educational theory; this included special study of Froebel, however, Owen stressed the importance of not treating his work in isolation, but in the context of his contemporaries and modern theorists. Given Owen's role in promoting academic professional training her dismissal of the views of Munday, Henland and Pearse is unsurprising: 'teachers of the youngest children need quite as thorough a training as others...She disagreed entirely with the contention that young girls just leaving school are suitable teachers for young children because of being "nearer to the child's mind"' (ibid. p.113). Owen underwent a thorough training, firstly in Froebelian pedagogy at Blackheath Kindergarten Training College under its founder, Adelaide Wragge, subsequently gaining a BSc at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York (Brehony 1987). The interest expressed by Owen in contextualising Froebel may prefigure her later partial move away from advocacy of Froebelian pedagogy, discussed in Chapter Five.

### **3.5 The Report: a Froebel 'voice'**

The Committee accepted the practical necessity for nursery schools, given the realities of working class life, citing 'social, hygienic, and educational grounds' (Board of Education, 1908, p.57). The term 'Nursery School' was used to encompass babies' classes and rooms, kindergartens and day nurseries. Omission of free kindergartens from the Committee's list is intriguing; there was no official Froebel representation in witness evidence, and here this Froebelian innovation was missing, yet it offered the model proposed for nursery schools by the Committee encompassing health and welfare as well as educational concerns. Possibly the Committee used the term in a generic sense, as it was unlikely it intended to associate the middle class kindergarten with babies' classes and day nurseries. Recommendations for premises and curriculum drew closely on the evidence of Shaw and Kemp. With regard to staffing the committee suggested '[p]robably the best person to have the management



of the Nursery School will be a well-educated teacher who has been trained on Froebelian principles *in the widest sense of the term* (ibid. p.23, emphasis added). This established trained teachers as the standard, while acknowledging Froebelian principles as the basis for the appropriate approach. A gendered recommendation excluded men as possible teachers of the young child: '[a] motherly instinct is an essential requirement' (ibid). In the final recommendations the specific reference to Froebelian principles (ibid. p.58) was omitted, although suggesting LEAs should 'arrange classes where Kindergarten methods are taught, and to give teachers the option of attending them' (ibid. p.59). This may suggest the committee did not wish to be overly prescriptive in recommending Froebelian training in a document emanating from the Board.

Underpinning the Consultative Committee's proposals for nursery schools was 'right development of home life' (ibid. p.18); the Committee argued that nursery schools could 'directly and indirectly promote and encourage it' (ibid); with better educational opportunities as an important part of improved social conditions, this could lead to a decrease in numbers of young children receiving inadequate parental care. In this respect, the report reflected contemporary discourse of racial degeneration which framed the working-class mother as a particular target for intervention (Searle 1971; Lewis 1986; Ross 1993).

Although the Committee took evidence from the NSDN it did not favour day nursery or crèche provision; instead it recommended nursery schools as 'an integral part of the Public Elementary School system' (Board of Education, 1908, p.20), rather than under the remit of medical and welfare structures. As shown, nursery schools included day nurseries, thus integrating welfare with education, as was the case in free kindergartens. While the welfare aspect was firmly embedded in its recommendations, the educational sphere was foregrounded, and the model proposed was demonstrably Froebelian in ethos and practice.

### **3.6 Responses to the Committee's report**

#### **3.6.1 The Froebel Society**

Responses to the report in *Child Life*, notably by Hermione Unwin and Claude Montefiore, made no explicit reference to failure to consult the Society. Unwin noted that the information obtained 'represents practically all points of view' (Unwin 1908, p.277). No comment was made on inclusion of day nurseries, alongside kindergartens, in the conception of nursery schools. This was surprising, as it could be seen to undermine the kindergarten's educational status. In fact, Unwin approved adoption of the term 'nursery school', as long as stress was placed on 'nursery' rather than 'school'. She particularly praised the view that nursery school teaching and care of young children was at least as demanding as education of older children. In her opinion the recommendations 'will be heartily approved by all Froebelians' (1908, p.278)

Montefiore also praised the Report's tone and the nature of its recommendations. Like Unwin, he approved the view taken of qualities and skills required of teachers and quoted the recommendation about teachers and Froebel training (Montefiore 1908). Implicit criticism of failure to consult the Froebel Society may be detected in the comment: '[t]he committee have thus adopted the views which it has been the business of the Froebel Society to advocate for many years' (ibid, p.279). Montefiore concluded:

'the Council hoped that it might to some extent strengthen the hands of the Board if the thorough agreement of their body – consisting as it does, to a very large extent, of experts in "infant" education – with the proposals and report of the Committee, were made clearly and officially known' (ibid)

Brown Smith (1908, p.804) described the Report as 'one of the most human [sic] and progressive documents of a Board that has recently done a good deal of human and progressive work'. She noted

the existence of practical models for this 'new type of school' in the UK, in the free kindergartens; however, they were funded by what she termed 'casual and financially limited philanthropy' (ibid). The National Froebel Union also reacted positively to the recommendation in the Report for 'nurse attendants' or 'school helps' (Board of Education, 1908, p.58) by establishing the Child Attendant Association and a training scheme, discussed in Chapter Six.

### **3.6.2 The London County Council**

The LCC's response was made in a series of memos presented to the Day Schools Sub-Committee in February 1910, including comments from the Council's Educational Adviser, William Garnett, Educational Officer Robert Blair, Medical Officer James Kerr, the Comptroller, H.E. Hayward and Cyril Jackson, Chair of the Education Committee (London County Council, 1910, 22nd February) Blair noted that nursery school provision was considered by the Sub-Committee in 1905, following the women inspectors' report, and subsequently. The decision to continue to admit children to schools was taken because of unsuitability of home conditions and because 'the privilege could not be withdrawn without grave discomfort and serious complaint' (ibid, p.26).

Blair criticised the Committee's view that nursery schools would 'foster a truer and better tradition of home life', resulting in reduction in need for them; it showed lack of awareness of the 'necessity which causes a large proportion of the mothers to be engaged in various employments which prevent them from looking after their children' (ibid, p.28), a factor which he envisaged would worsen rather than improve. Blair suggested a number of schools should implement the proposals in the first instance; one of the schools chosen was Devons Road, Bow, where the Froebelian Clara Grant was head teacher, however, it was not one of the two finally selected.

Garnett's report illuminated the relationship between the London County Council, as a huge provider of state education, and the Board. Although politically the LCC and central government were in Conservative hands in 1910 other power plays of independence and status were arguably at stake, with the LCC wanting to stress its power to initiate and implement policy in London. Garnett suggested that recommendations made by the committee were not new; they included points 'some of

which have been frequently recommended by the Council's officers' (ibid, p.23). Further, they reflected the direction in which practical changes were already taking place in LCC schools. Garnett reiterated the Committee's proposal that the most appropriate teacher would have Froebel training; further, that Superintendents of crèche should be expected to train the children 'more or less on Froebelian lines' (ibid, p.25). Garnett did concede that 'no officer has hitherto had the courage to go quite so far' as did the Committee's recommendations (ibid, p.25). Acknowledging that implementation of the Committee's recommendations 'in their entirety and in a liberal spirit' would greatly increase provision for children from three to five, in most cases doubling the cost, Garnett concluded, in contrast to Jackson, that 'great advantages would accrue to the children' (ibid). Echoing these comments that the LCC was in advance of the Board, Kerr pointed out that the Committee's conclusions had been anticipated in his reports to LCC, notably in 1905; thus he was 'in complete agreement with the report from the school doctor's point of view' (ibid, p.30). Hayward and Jackson were less than enthusiastic, expressing considerable caution as to costs. Jackson re-iterated comments from his preface to the 1905 report; he quoted Newsholme 'since it is generally admitted that children under five gain no educational advantage by school attendance they should be excluded from the schools' (ibid, p.34). Further, he cited Munday, 'one of the most experienced of the Board of Education inspectors', in arguing for staff "nearer to the child's mind" rather than an 'all-knowing certificated teacher' (ibid.). The Sub-Committee finally agreed to carry out a six month experiment at George Street School, Camberwell, and Morning Lane School, Hackney. Here, Jackson's suggestion that married women or widows might be targeted for the work was addressed by drafting in part-time cleaners from neighbouring cookery centres, 'sensible, middle-aged women accustomed to deal with children' (ibid, p.37), to assist certificated teachers.

### **3.7 What the 1908 Committee achieved**

Morant's preface to the 1908 report did not augur well for implementation of its recommendations:

The very bulk and comprehensiveness of the Report and the Evidence here presented...render it impossible for them without long and careful consideration to express an opinion as to the conclusions of the Committee, and still less to formulate any new policy on them (Board of Education, 1908, p.1)

What was possible was the immediate publication of the report; no legislation was put in place to implement nursery schools before 1918, and then only after a further report was from the Board's Office Committee in 1917, which had no representation from female HMIs; although medical concerns were represented by Dr. Janet Campbell, educational considerations were subject to discussion and recommendation (Board of Education, 1917). The Office Committee noted assistance derived from the report but stated: 'the practical results of the recommendations of that Committee in regard to Nursery Schools have been almost negligible' (ibid). This suggests criticism of the CC's' ineffectiveness was well-grounded; nevertheless, the report established a framework for discussion which was taken forward in 1917, with permissive legislation for nursery schools following in the 1918 Education Act.

#### **4. The Consultative Committee on Infant and Nursery Schools, 1933**

Following on from the CC's report on the primary schools, published in 1931 and to which the Froebel Society was invited to submit a memorandum (Board of Education, 1931), the final Committee chaired by Henry Hadow began its investigations into infant and nursery schools in that year (Board of Education, 1933). The 1931 Report expressed a view of the nature and curriculum of the primary school in keeping with Froebelian principles and expressed by the majority of witnesses: 'primary education would gain greatly in realism and power of inspiration if an attempt were more generally made to think of the curriculum less in terms of departments of knowledge to be taught, and more of activities to be fostered and interests to be broadened' (ibid, p.xix). Froebelian language was evident in terms used to describe the curriculum, for example: 'harmonious interplay' and 'unity' (ibid, p.xvii); the school was described as 'not the antithesis of life, but...its complement and commentary' (ibid,

p.xvi). The Froebel Society viewed its remit as covering the junior school as well as the nursery and infant age group; the 1931 Report provided an important validation of its pedagogical approach. These views were reiterated in the 1933 report, thus providing a unified pedagogical underpinning for the entire age group from three to eleven. A large body of evidence has survived for the 1933 report and showed conduits for expression of Froebelian principles. The evidence reviewed here is a summary of the oral evidence of witnesses by the Secretary, R.F. Young. In the absence of written evidence from witnesses it cannot be taken as an accurate representation of views. Following the taking of oral evidence a Drafting Sub-Committee extrapolated key points as a basis for discussion by the full committee. Extracts from the evidence were then correlated to show the range of views, for example on problems of school attendance of under-sevens (including length of day and parental role), on whether attendance of under-fives should be compulsory, on the effect, aim and function of schooling for this age group and on types of provision (nursery classes or nursery schools (Board of Education, 1930-32).

#### **4.1 Membership of the 1933 Consultative Committee**

Only six members were women, despite the fact that nursery and infant school teaching remained the province of women. Freda Hawtrey, Principal of Avery Hill Training College, was a Froebel Society Council member from 1922-27. By this point she was a central figure in the NSA. Mansbridge was a surviving member from the 1908 Committee. Miss E.R. [Essie] Conway was a long-serving member of the Committee whose career had progressed from pupil-teacher to Principal of an experimental elementary school in Liverpool (Harrop 2000). Her lower-middle class credentials contrasted with those of Hawtrey and another female colleague, Lynda Grier, whose privileged backgrounds included education at Oxford and Cambridge respectively (ibid). Conway was also actively involved in the National Union of Teachers, as a member of its Executive and the second woman President; Cleghorn, the first woman President served on the Consultative Committee at the time of the 1908 Report. Conway's career, and the regard in which she was held (Harrop, op.cit.) may indicate that gendered class barriers were gradually breaking down.

## **4.2 Conduits for Froebelian pedagogy**

The Committee invited individual witnesses and organisations from across the pedagogical spectrum of educational activity. Apart from the Froebel Society, invitees included the English Branch of the Montessori International Society, represented by Montessori herself, the NEF, the NSA and teacher organisations, including the NUWT. The NSA had four representatives including Grace Owen, who had given evidence to the 1908 Committee, and Miss A. M. Wallis of Columbia Market Nursery School in Bethnal Green.

Apart from invitees, four hundred and forty two individuals and twenty one organizations, many of significance, sent in memoranda and statistics. Some individuals may have represented the views of organizations with which they were associated, for example Jessie White of the Auto-Education Institute, London. A number of those invited to give evidence or volunteering information were current, former or future members of the Froebel Society, including Lily Reed, Frances Roe, Mabel Wellock, Florence Webb, J.J. Findlay and Rose Monkhouse. Others had participated in Froebel Society lectures or summer schools (Margaret Drummond, Susan Isaacs, E. Stevinson, Arnold Gesell, Cyril Burt). Thus, there were many potential conduits for the 'Froebel' voice in the evidence presented, albeit nuanced by individual interests and interpretations. Moreover, participation in Society events cannot be taken as conclusive evidence of Froebelian sympathies; as noted previously, Drummond was described by Evelyn Kenwick as Montessorian. What this suggests is the increasing difficulty of assigning the label 'Froebelian' as the pedagogy was reconceptualised.

## **4.3 Evidence from government departments**

The Committee consulted representatives from the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education. The majority of Board witnesses were HMIs. Three were associated with the Froebel movement and discussed in Chapter Three: Brown Smith, Hill and Greaves. Given that Brown Smith and Hill had both retired, their presence as witnesses indicated status as experts. Janet Campbell and George

Newman represented the Ministry of Health. Both Campbell and Newman had long involvement in discussions concerning nursery schools. As suggested in Chapter Three, Campbell did not seem fully aware of, or sympathetic to, the distinction between day nurseries and nursery schools. Newman's particular expertise in children's health derived from his role as Chief Medical Officer to the Ministry of Health and Board of Education; his annual reports set out the dire facts of children's health, providing extensive ammunition for the advocates of nursery schools (Lowndes 1969).

#### **4.4 Evidence from HMIs: Henrietta Brown Smith and Miss M.C.L. Greaves**

Brown Smith's evidence provided a strong statement of Froebelian revisionist pedagogy. Explaining how the aims of schools could be met, she stressed the vital role played by two chief factors, firstly the 'life and spirit' of the school, echoing Kemp's evidence to the 1908 committee, and secondly the 'material conditions' (Board of Education, 1930-32). She strongly criticised the conception of infant schools as merely preparation for the next phase, the argument made by headmaster Walter Roberts for the nursery school in 1908; the needs of children of this age were neglected or 'hurried over' as a consequence (ibid) and the curriculum came to be regarded as 'a kind of simplified version of the next Department. To supply knowledge and train skill has been more or less the general aim' (ibid). She argued that this confused children and was an adult conception of how knowledge was organised. Brown Smith's alternative view was articulated in language redolent of Froebel, suggesting that for the young child the world was 'one thing with many aspects' and the teacher needed to present it as an 'unbroken unity' (ibid). Activities needed to begin with the child's interests and emerge from their contact with the world. It was important to draw on his 'home life, or his animals, or his toys, or his desire to make things' (ibid). This strongly echoed Froebel's advice to parents to involve young children in household activities and their urge both to construct and for constructive work, in *The Education of Man* (Froebel 1887, first published 1826). Brown Smith cited Pestalozzi's phrase, 'it is life that educates', and noted that Froebel made this approach 'his foundation principle' (Board of Education, 1930-32.). She described how 'correlation' of subjects, which featured in practical guidelines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Bloomer 1910), linked to the 'centres of interest' formulated by Belgium educator Ovide Decroly's *Maison des Petits* in Brussels (Hamaide



1925) and to the project method developed in America (Kilpatrick 1918; McMurry 1921; Gull 1932) as attempts to solve the problem of how to teach young children. She suggested the project method was most fully developed in later school work but the infant school could provide for a series of small projects arising out of the interests of a young child's life:

[H]is gardening and tending of animals is his Nature Study, his experiments with bricks, his grouping of patterns, his weighing, measuring, and balancing is his mathematical study: his questions, and constant craving for words to fit new ideas, becomes his language exercise, his constructive activity, his handwork, experiments with colour and form, his art. And his desire to extend experience and enjoy imaginative situations is satisfied by stories, as his instructive love of rhythm and sound is satisfied by music (ibid)

As discussed in Chapter Eight, the project method was a central feature of revisionist Froebelian pedagogy in the period up to 1939. Brown Smith's argument that 'a child will touch the so-called curriculum at the points at which his interest arises' (ibid.) closely reflected evidence of Froebel Society witnesses. The focus on a strong professional profile emerged from her evidence on teachers. Brown Smith stated that 'the very essence and spirit' of schools depended on the Head Mistress and staff. She argued that teachers of young children required a wide education but with training for this area of work. In order to secure mobility for staff between the nursery, infant and primary schools, training college courses for infant teachers needed to cover work in all types of schools. This addressed the problem of nursery school teachers in particular, whose career prospects lacked opportunities for progression. The professional identity of teachers of young children presented by Brown Smith continued to reflect gendered notions and an echo of maternalist sentiment may be detected in her statement that staff should have 'a natural love for children' (ibid).

Greaves situated her evidence relating to nursery schools and classes in the context of developments in free kindergartens inspired by Pestalozzi and Froebel. She noted that staff in free kindergartens usually had Froebel training; she also cited work by Froebel-trained teachers in hospitals and day nurseries. Describing existing arrangements for nursery education, Greaves argued for the superiority

of nursery schools. She stressed the broad range of professional skills and the 'rare gifts' required by Superintendents, and the requirement for adequate numbers of certificate teachers to support her [sic] (Board of Education, 1930-32). Her conception of professional role reflected the multidisciplinary requirements of nursery school work: a nurse (hygiene), teacher (psychology of child development) and social worker (work with parents). The activities Greaves described, gardening and nature walks, musical activities (the percussion band, singing and dancing) and materials for self-expression, were derived from Froebelian pedagogy. Her description of the morning ring as an opportunity for children 'to realise themselves as a family group and take part in a social and spiritual experience' (ibid), recalled the domestic and spiritual ethos of the kindergarten. At the same time, some of Greaves' evidence showed the influence of Montessori. She cited the use of special apparatus, including Montessori material, as useful for sense-discrimination, distinguished from 'free play with toys'. She recommended that the less teachers interfere in the children's activities the better, reflecting Montessori's view of the role of the Directress.

#### **4.5 Evidence Presented by the Froebel Society**

The Froebel Society was represented by three witnesses consisting of its secretary, Geraldine Ostle, and two training college lecturers - M.L. Haskell from Clapham High School and Evelyn Kenwick from Maria Grey Training College. Ostle was a long-standing advocate for the Society; her work is discussed elsewhere in this thesis. The evidence they presented drew on the Consultative Committee's primary school report, published in 1931, and stressed the need for an integrated approach to the education of two to seven year-olds but acknowledged the need to consider the period in two stages, from two to five and five to seven.

##### **4.5.1 The Nursery School**

The language used by Ostle, Haskell and Kenwick showed how Montessori concepts had entered Froebelian discourse, as in the italicised quotations which follow. They emphasised that in the nursery

period the child 'learns by experiment', and had the ability to concentrate for long periods on '*repetition of self-chosen activities*' (Board of Education, 1930-32, added emphasis). Nonetheless, clear differences with Montessori remained in the focus on the educational value of play: '[f]or these reasons he plays. His whole life is bound up in play...play satisfies his mental needs, and play is of itself educative' (ibid, original emphasis). The witnesses identified the need for experience '*in a free environment*' (ibid., added emphasis) as the basis for all aspects of the child's development, including spiritual. A range of play scenarios were recommended, to provide for sensory experiences but also to introduce counting and concepts of grouping through shape and form. Play houses, stations and farms provided for a range of role play opportunities. Suggestions for nature study included an indoor toy park with growing flowers and plants and an outside garden area. Sand, clay, bricks and wooden boxes provided opportunities for construction; significantly Froebel Gifts were not included, suggesting how far revisionist pedagogy had rewritten the script. Resources for manipulation included beads, shells, and bags of buttons. Emphasis was on large resources which would not strain eyes or require fine motor skills, which was a particular criticism made by Montessori (1912) but also Froebelians such as Murray (1903; [1919]) of the early use of Froebel's occupations. The witnesses stressed the need for children to choose their own activities and for schools to avoid all formal work before the age of seven.

#### **4.5.2 The Infant School**

Ostle et al argued that from five to seven 'the play impulse is strong' and 'self-initiated projects' led to mental progress (ibid). They criticised infant schools for giving too much time to the three R's at a point when collaborative play was developing; handwork was 'apt to be treated as a relaxation' (ibid). The witnesses claimed it was 'dangerous to give formal language exercise before the age of seven' (ibid) and recommended that one hour a day should be devoted to mastering the 'tool subjects' (ibid). A strong claim was made for the learning opportunities of project work; the curriculum could spring from children's interests. A Christmas project drew on 'measurement, art, writing, language in choice of verses' in the making cards, presents, calendars and decorations (ibid.). Singing carols and acting

the Christmas story provided for language development and fostered interest in music. Nevertheless, they argued for a balanced approach in which projects took their place alongside other methods; an interest in beauty, whether in nature, pictorial art, music, poetry, stories and acting, should be cultivated for their own sake and 'not merely as it bears on other interests' (ibid).

#### **4.5.3 Professional roles for nursery teachers**

The evidence located did not include the Society's views on infant school teachers. Ostle et al characterised the role of nursery school teachers as adaptable and energetic, but also a poised and a stable presence. Informality was required, with readiness to play with the children or to stand back. Unsurprisingly, possession of the Froebel Certificate was advocated for nursery school teachers, supplemented by the NFU Nursery School Diploma, introduced in 1931.

Although there was no reference to Froebel or to the Gifts and Occupations in the Froebel Society evidence the evidence presented was consonant with the revisionist pedagogy articulated since 1900.

#### **4.6 The Report: a Froebel 'voice'**

Inclusion of an historical introductory chapter suggested the CC's interest in the antecedents of the current system. Reference was made to the differing contributions of Froebel and Montessori (Board of Education, 1933, p.xix). Throughout the report, emphasis was placed on the need for continuity across the primary period: '[it] should be regarded as a continuous whole...there should be no abrupt break in the education of children under and over seven, and still less in the education of those under and over five' (ibid.,p.174-5). This reflected Froebel's view of holistic development expressed in *The Education of Man*:

Not only in regard to the cultivation of the divine and religious elements in man, but in his entire cultivation, it is highly important that his development should proceed continuously from one point, and that this continuous progress be seen and ever guarded. Sharp limits and

definite subdivisions within the continuous series of the years of development, withdrawing from attention the permanent continuity, the living connection, the inner living essence, are therefore highly pernicious, and even destructive in their influence. Thus, it is highly pernicious to consider the stages of human development infant, child, boy or girl, youth or maiden, man or woman, old man or matron as really distinct, and not, as life shows them, as continuous in themselves, in unbroken transitions (Froebel 1887, first published 1826, p.27)

The report noted that Froebel's Gifts were originally used in 'mechanical and rigid form' and with connected with set exercises (Board of Education, 1933, p. xix). It recognised this represented a hiatus between the letter and the spirit of Froebelian principles; full recognition of his liberal conception was only possible 'when the child is fully recognised as an individual and not as a member of a class' (ibid). Significantly, the report noted that development of individual and group methods 'has made possible the development of these principles', thus acknowledging the influence of Froebel in infant schools; France Roe's implementation of these methods in her schools in London is discussed in Chapter Seven. The report also described developments based on Montessori's 'influence and practical example' as 'that special type or modification of the Froebelian practice' (ibid), a description which was unlikely to receive the approbation of either camp. McMillan's conception of the nursery school as an open-air 'garden-playground' with shelters (ibid, p.xxi), and her forceful rhetoric linking poor health with the ability to learn, also provided strong underpinning for the report.

#### **4.6.1 The Nursery School**

The report described the function of the nursery school as providing a suitable environment in which 'attention to the physical well-being of the child will be the supreme requirement' (ibid, p.117); effects of illness at this stage had long-term consequences. In language reflecting the new discipline of developmental psychology, it noted that the roots of 'moral abnormality and perversion, of nervous disorder and faulty habit-formation' could also be traced to this period. The report recommended as much opportunity for activity and movement, sensory exploration and experiment in the open air as possible. The language used and activities proposed recalled Froebel's prescriptions, for example the

recommendation to provide 'little gardens where the children can share in cultivating' (ibid, p.119). The school should attempt 'to plant the child in his natural biological environment, to keep him out of doors with plenty of air, sunlight and space, surrounded with trees, plants and animals, with places that he can explore pools where he can paddle and sandpits where he can dig' (ibid). Froebel described how children's inner life required expression through imaginative play; the report acknowledged that 'as soon as he can talk he can think, and has begun to enter a private life of fancy and imagination' (ibid, p.120). The report trod a delicate line, criticising Montessori's 'embargo' on fantasy play, but distancing itself: '[m]ost English teachers' disagree' with her view (ibid). It continued that teachers recognised the 'child's need to experiment actively with real things' (ibid); Montessori prohibited experimentation with her didactic apparatus in ways for which it was not intended. The report followed the Froebelian witnesses in concluding that children needed such play up to the age of six or seven (ibid, p.181).

#### **4.6.2 The Infant School**

Froebelian pedagogy underpinned the 1933 report's recommendations on infant school teaching. The report noted that the guiding principle advocated for the entire primary school period, set out in the previous CC report, was equally applicable for the infant period, that 'the curriculum is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored' (ibid, p.183). Play was the means for the child's expression of interests and the report noted that 'the antithesis between work and play will not exist for the child' (ibid, p.125). Froebel used the terms 'play' and 'work' interchangeably while Montessori decried use of the term 'play' as it did not reflect her view of how children approached activities. The report summed up its view as '[d]uring the infant stage the play-way is the best way' (ibid). The report noted Froebel's contribution in providing for children's impulse for constructive and creative work, albeit that his ideas had been adopted mechanically. Here the report advocated a Froebelian rather than a Montessorian stance, arguing that best development was secured when a child was 'left to make what he likes, how he likes and, within reason, when he likes than by any set lesson' (ibid, p.130). Discussing when children should begin formal learning of the

'3 Rs', the report cited the view of Cyril Burt's and evidence from American studies to support the Froebelian principle that it should not take place before the age of six 'at the very earliest' (ibid, p.133). However, the report attempted to frame its recommendations in terms which took account of features from both Froebel and Montessori, and which referred to difficulties with both. For Montessori, dangers lay in mechanistic use of apparatus and reliance on 'a great name' which encouraged teachers to stand aside leaving children to themselves. For Froebel, difficulties of understanding his work led to misinterpretation and failure to base activities on children's spontaneous interests. The report concluded that the 'systems' shared an underlying principle, that the child should be enabled to teach himself, and that what he learnt should emerge from an instructive environment, not from an instructor.

#### **4.7 The Response of the Froebel Society**

*Child Life* carried Froebelian responses to the Report. Despite the attempted forced marriage of Froebel and Montessori to arrive at a common pedagogical principle, Council member Evelyn Kenrick eulogised '[it is] no more and no less than a complete and comprehensive summary of the principles of Froebel, translated into terms of modern methods. Its 300 pages are in-breathed by the spirit of Froebel, and fresh light is shed upon his principles and methods' (Kenrick 1934, p.51). Quoting the Report's view that 'the play-way is the best way', she argued '[i]n one short but powerful sentence is Froebel's greatest contribution thus stated, and the disciple of Froebel reads with glowing inspiration and fresh zeal' (ibid, p.51). Kenrick questioned the comparison of Froebel and Montessori as resting on a misunderstanding of Froebel; nevertheless, she proclaimed that 'Play, Continuity, Activity, Experience – these essential principles of Froebel's educational scheme are interwoven like golden threads through the fabric of the Report' (ibid, p.52-3).

Hawtrey's response was more cautious (Hawtrey 1934); she developed the point made in her note, appended to the report, on the age range for nursery education where she proposed an extension of the age range up to seven. She focused on shortcomings in the recommendations for children up to seven, for example, the withdrawal of free milk. Hawtrey noted that only teachers in nursery schools were recommended to have additional 'helpers', although infant school classes may well contain forty

children. She noted the meagre provision for under-fives, with only 13% of children between 3-5 attending infants departments of the elementary schools or nursery schools and pointed out that in 1932 there were just fifty five nursery schools accommodating 4,250 children. There is more than a hint of cynicism in her response to recommendation 77: that '[e]ach LEA should survey the needs of their area...and after consultation with the Board of Education should take such steps as may seem to them desirable to provide nurture and training in schools for children below the age of five' (Board of Education, 1933, p.188). Hawtrey asked '[w]hat steps will seem desirable to the Board of Education and the LEAs?' (Hawtrey, op.cit., p.74). She answered her question by pointing out that when LEAs were allowed to refuse to admit children under five some thirty years previously, i.e. in the decade of our first Consultative Committee Report, the numbers of under-fives in school nearly halved, from 615,607 to 350,591, in just ten years.

## **5. After Hadow: Provision for Nursery and Infant Education**

As with the 1908 Report, the practical outcomes of the 1933 CC Report were disappointing for those Froebelians and others looking for action to implement nursery schools. Chapter Three showed how debate over provision, in separate nursery schools, classes or wings, continued up to 1939 within the Board of Education and the LCC. The arrangement, proposed by Hawtrey, of a school for two to seven year olds was described in a minute paper by Dr Lilian Wilson in 1935 merely as 'interesting' (Board of Education, 1931-36). Wilson wrote to C.W. Maudsley (Medical Branch) that she thought most children of five plus were 'quite fitted to enter an ordinary Infant School', a view strongly contested by proponents of nursery schools. Wilson also questioned the practical implementation of Hawtrey's proposal and no action was taken before the close of the period.

## **6. Conclusion**

This chapter has shown how Froebelian pedagogy was conveyed to the Consultative Committee which reported on education for children up to five in 1908 and from two plus to seven plus in 1933. The



Committee was dominated numerically by men throughout this period, despite growing use of experts in policy-making structures. However, Froebelian voices were represented on the committee, but their evidence showed that they held diverse views on issues such as professional status, reinforcing the findings of Chapter Three. Froebelian views were also heard through participation of Froebelians as invited witnesses and as submitters of evidence. Evidence suggested that women's contributions were not marginalised; both reports made considerable use of their witness statements. The conclusions of the 1908 Report drew substantially on points made by Froebelians Kemp and Shaw. Kemp's evidence reflected her advocacy of Froebelian pedagogy, evident in her membership of her local Froebel Society branch. Shaw's reputation as a successful innovator in developing practice drawing on Froebelian pedagogy gave her a particular expertise for this committee. In 1933, evidence from the three female Froebel Society witnesses, and that of HMIs associated with the movement, fed into the Report's conclusions on the form teaching should take in nursery and infant schools, on teacher-training, and on staffing. Debate on the relationship between the nursery and infant schools was reflected in the Reports of 1931 and 1933. Both maintained that where possible, 'there should be separate schools or departments for children under the age of seven' (Board of Education, 1933, p.175), a view consonant with Froebelian pedagogy. However, the 1933 report proposed that where nursery schools were desirable, they should provide for children up to five. The Froebelian Freda Hawtrey challenged this view in a separate note, showing no hesitation in publicly disagreeing with the overall conclusions of this male-dominated committee.

Ultimately, the practical outcomes of the reports discussed here were disappointing for Froebelians but this reflects the status of the Committee as a professional voice rather than an outlet for the views of the state educational bureaucracy (Brehony 1994). Arguably, both reports provided a framework for discussion which informed ongoing public and official debate. The reports of 1931 and 1933 supported the experimentation which some infant teachers were introducing into their practice; examples are discussed in Chapter Seven and Eight. While Froebelian pedagogy was strongly represented, the 1933 Report also took some Montessori procedures into account; however, the report identified fewer shortcomings in Froebelian principles, focusing instead on misinterpretation by teachers. In contrast,

the report noted two key aspects of Montessori pedagogy which could have a negative impact on children's learning. The overall response of Froebelians to both reports was positive. Froebelian pedagogy was evident in the conclusions of both and, in 1933, the continuing relevance of Froebel was acknowledged, albeit alongside recognition of Montessori's contribution. The eclecticism which this report proposed is discussed in relation to practice in schools in Chapter Seven.

## **Chapter Five**

# **Organisational relationships: Froebelians and the Nursery School Association**

### **1. Introduction**

From the establishment of the Froebel Society in November 1874, and throughout the remaining years of the nineteenth century, it was unrivalled as an organisation promoting an alternative to the rigidity of state-provided education for young children. The formation of new organisations, such as the Nursery School Association [NSA], which shared Froebelian concerns was part of the new educational landscape from 1900 to 1939 and presented Froebelians with a challenge to their hegemony. This chapter analyses the relationships which the Froebel Society and individual members developed with organisations and focuses specifically on those with the NSA, founded to lobby for the establishment of nursery schools in 1923. It shows how relationships were fostered by common membership but also pursued through proposals to work more closely, not simply through joint activity but also through affiliation or amalgamation. Affiliation, whereby organisations agreed to work in association, offered retention of name and, thus, identity; in contrast amalgamation or merger resulted in the loss of independent status and name. The chapter identifies how these discussions aroused tensions within and between the Froebel Society and the NSA regarding identity and status. It illustrates the opportunities organisational structures (Council and Governing Body, committees and sub-committees) provided for women to achieve status as post-holders and as spokespersons, sometimes in pursuit of personal agendas, thus amalgamation threatened both organisational and individual status. It concludes that despite the financial pressures of the period, and the threat to the Froebel Society's status presented by the NSA, Froebelians were in the ascendancy in 1939.

## 1.1 Organisations and educational reform

Froebel Society Council minutes recorded correspondence with many organisations from 1900 to 1939 seeking representation on their committees and support for particular initiatives. The important role played by organisations in reforming practice was highlighted in the final article in a series on nursery schools published in the *Times Education Supplement* in 1917. The author referred to the beneficial influence of a number of organisations, in particular the Froebel Society and the Child Study Society [CSS], as an 'unfailing source of enlightenment and inspiration' (Anon 1917g, p.397). Chapter Two suggested that joint activity by organisations, such as branch meetings, offered opportunities for professional development for Froebelian teachers and wider dissemination of Froebelian pedagogy. Further, reformulation of Froebelian pedagogy was ongoing throughout the period; inter-organisational relationships supported this process through providing channels for cross-fertilisation of ideas. Inevitably, the proliferation of organisations with cognate interests (the Froebel Society, the NSA, the child study organisations, the Montessori Society) had consequences for them, with impacts on financial viability and, through discussions on amalgamation, on issues of identity.

Organisations advocating for nursery schools included the National Union of Women Workers [NUWW; National Council of Women from 1918], and the National Society of Children's Nurseries [NSCN], founded in 1906 as the National Society of Day Nurseries. These organisations contributed different perspectives to the contemporary debate, for example the NUWW represented the needs of working women for childcare. The NSCN offered a model of nursery provision distinct from that proposed by the Froebel Society and the NSA; however, data showed that Froebel Society relationships with these organisations were relatively insignificant. As Della Porta and Diani argue, '[i]nterorganizational relationships can vary markedly in terms both of content and of intensity' (1999 p. 124).

An organisation of great significance for Froebelians was the Montessori Society, founded by Bertram Hawker and Edmond Holmes in 1912 at Hawker's home in East Runton, Norfolk (Standing 1984). Kramer (1976) refers to archive sources held at the Association Montessori Internationale, founded in

Amsterdam in 1929. Radice ([1920]) briefly describes the Montessori Society in an appendix and lists members of the first committee, formed in 1912. However, Froebel Society archives do not refer to contact between the two organisations and there are no references to the Froebel Society by Radice or later in key texts on Montessori (Kramer 1976; Standing 1984; Lillard 2005).

Froebel Society Committee minutes, supported by a survey of the archives of the CSS and the NSA, identified the particular significance of these organisations for Froebelians. Published and unpublished discussion of the impact on Froebelian pedagogy of child study supported the choice of the CSS (Brehony 1987; Nawrotzki 2005; Brehony 2009a). The NSA was the principal organisation lobbying for nursery schools in this period. It thus represented a potential rival to the Froebel Society for membership and ‘voice’ with regard to provision for under-fives.

Despite rich data showing the involvement of Froebelians in child study organisations the decision was taken to focus in this thesis on the NSA in order to provide an in-depth analysis of how the Froebel Society managed organisational relationships. As an organisation with cognate concerns, the NSA was the key rival to the Froebel Society, albeit that the Society increasingly claimed a wider remit, evident in the addition of ‘and Junior Schools Association’ to the Society’s name in 1917, prior to the formation of the NSA. However, reference is made to supporting evidence from CSS archives where appropriate.

## **1.2 Identity, coordination of activity and status**

### **1.2.1 Identity**

Organisations provide a focus for individuals to develop ideas and strategies to promote them and facilitate opportunities for networking amongst members; both foster a sense of identity (Cunningham 2001; Diani 2004). This was evident in the discussion of Froebel Society branches and summer

schools in Chapter Two. At the same time that very sense of identity, what 'being Froebelian' meant, could impede the development of close ties amongst those pursuing similar aims in other organisations. Nevertheless, evidence presented in Chapter Two suggests that by 1939 branch activity led to reformulation of the composition of the Froebel movement from its middle class and female base in the period up to 1900, to encompass a wider class dimension if not a greater gender balance.

Debate within the Froebel Society about its continuation as an independent organisation developed in the 1890s. The Froebel Society never enjoyed financial stability; in 1898 financial dilemmas facing the Society were discussed at Council meetings (Froebel Society. Minutes VII, p.105-6). Montefiore, as Chairman, presented the case 'for and against the Society's continuing to exist *as a separate body*' (ibid, p.105, added emphasis); debate followed on the value of the Society's work. Alice Woods, Mrs Curwen & Mr Sharpe suggested 'afiliation [sic] with some larger body might, under the circumstances, be desirable' (ibid); no particular body was named. The suggestion was strongly opposed by Fanny Franks, who argued that despite its limited income 'there was still much work that the Society could do' (ibid, p.105). The meeting concluded with the decision to make no change to the constitution, instead, to focus on making the Society better known in the provinces and to engage with elementary teachers to make them more aware of Froebelian principles. Council Minutes demonstrated that the Froebel Society did subsequently seek closer forms of association, but not with those organisations which did not share its principles. It is conceivable that it was precisely the fear of identity loss which underpinned Franks' opposition.

### **1.2.2 Coordination of action**

Promotion of nursery education and the developmental significance of the early childhood period by both the Froebel Society and the NSA support the contention that:

[i]t is rare for an organization to be able to monopolize the representation of a certain complex of interests and values. Normally, it is essential to coordinate action and joint campaigns in order to achieve widespread protest [and] place certain themes on the political agenda (Della Porta and Diani 1999, p.124)

Coordination might entail 'exchange of information, and the pooling of resources for specific projects' (ibid, p.124-5). Della Porta and Diani used the term '*competitive cooperation*' [original emphasis] to denote the situation which arises when organisations compete for support and 'voice':

In such cases, two (or more) movement organizations concerned with the same issues are keen to develop joint initiatives, based on compatible definitions of the issues and some degree of identity; but at the same time, they find themselves facing stiff mutual competition for the same support base, and for similar sectors of public opinion whose interests they wish to represent. A model of interaction characterized by a degree of interorganizational polemic emerges, but does not lead to a severe breakdown of channels of communication (ibid, p.125)

Evidence discussed below shows that these complex issues were characteristic of individual and organisational relationships between the Froebel Society and the NSA, and Della Porta and Diani's conclusion applied to them.

Chapter Three identified that Froebelian lobbying for changes to state-provided infant education, including babies' classes, began in the nineteenth century. This challenges suggestions that it was the exclusion of under-fives from schools, following amendments in the 1905 Code, that propelled 'the entry of the Froebel Society and the Child Study organizations into political activity, debate and agitation over the education of the child under five' (Brehony 1987, p.623-4). However, as debate about children under five developed in the first decade of the twentieth century the Society formed a Propaganda Committee which first met in March 1905. Although no specific reason was given for its formation, discussion in Council on framing the Society's response to political developments suggested a separate committee was needed to organise this aspect of the Society's activities. If Froebelian lobbying was not new, joint agitation, for example deputations to the Board of Education, and co-

ordinated activity, including lecture series and branches, was facilitated by close links between the Froebel Society and specific organisations, such as the CSS and NSA.

#### **1.2.2.1 The Conference of Educational Associations**

Co-ordinating the annual meetings of a more disparate range of educational organisations was the purpose of the Conference of Educational Associations [CEA]. The CEA's roots were described by Henrietta Busk, its Honorary Organiser and Treasurer, in 1919 (Conference of Educational Associations 1919). The first proposal to co-ordinate activity was made in 1904, in response to the situation where many organisations were holding their annual meetings at the same time, making attendance difficult for those who belonged to more than one. Proposals made at the initial meeting convened by the Teachers' Guild were not unanimously welcomed. Busk speculated that '[t]he reason for the apathy ...seemed to arise from the fear that each Association would not be able to arrange its own meetings, or keep them for the benefit of its own members' (ibid). Thus the proposals seemed to threaten the autonomy of participating organisations, despite the suggestion that each held both private meetings for members as well as open meetings. A letter from the Teachers' Guild, read at a meeting of the Froebel Society's Propaganda Committee in 1906, invited the Society's Council to nominate one representative to serve on a Joint Committee of Educational Societies formed to discuss the advisability of co-ordinating the Annual Conferences of societies under joint control in one suitable building and with a careful adjustment of dates. It was suggested that only subjects of broad educational interest, likely to appeal to all members of the teaching profession, should be discussed. The Propaganda Committee, at this time consisting of Maria Findlay, Esther Lawrence and Alice Ravenhill, agreed that Montefiore, then Honorary Secretary, be asked to represent Council at the preliminary meeting (Froebel Society. GPC Minutes, January 1906). A committee representing eighteen organisations was formed in 1910 with Henrietta Brown Smith and Elsie Murray representing the Froebel Society. The first conference, held in January 1913, represented just nine organisations. One of those which had withdrawn was the CSS. Busk drew attention to the potential for participants to become acquainted with new ideas and for development of networks which could widen the membership base of organisations:



[I]n order to emphasise the united social side of the Conference a soiree was held, which proved very attractive. Many old acquaintanceships were renewed. More new ones made, and teachers of all kinds found themselves encouraged and given fresh enthusiasm, though the friendly intercourse with other types of teachers and administrators of education, on equal ground (ibid).

The number of participating organisations increased to twenty one in 1914 and to nearly forty by 1919, with attendance of between 3000 to 4000 members. Growth continued into the 1930s; by 1935 Busk reported that there were fifty four affiliated societies, including the CSS, NSA, Montessori Society, New Education Fellowship [NEF] and the Froebel Society. This necessitated a more sophisticated organisational structure and an Executive Committee and Conference Committee were created, the latter with representatives from all organisations which co-ordinated their meetings through the Conference. On this the Froebel Society was represented by its secretary, [Mary] Geraldine Ostle who was also a member of the NSA and the CSS. The significance of the CEA lay in two key areas. Firstly, it co-ordinated the annual meetings of a large range of organisations which obviated clashes of dates. Although some meetings held by individual societies were open only to members, a great many were open to all. Secondly, printed annual reports of conference proceedings made available to all the discussions held by each organisation. Thus, lectures given in closed meetings entered the public domain. For all organisations, exposure to new ideas could foster new ways of thinking about their own particular area of interest, and, in the case of Froebelians a continuing stimulus to the revisionist debate which had begun in the 1890s. The Conference also facilitated joint agitation, an example being a resolution passed at the meeting in 1918, urging the government to proceed 'at the earliest possible date' with Fisher's Bill. This resolution, with signatories, was printed on the title page of the February 1918 issue of *Child Life*. In exposing teachers to a range of topics across disciplines the CEA contributed to the development of professional expertise, given many of them were still untrained (Partington 1976).

### **1.2.2.2 Responses to government policy**

A second example of coordinated action was the response to delayed implementation of Section 19 of the Education Act 1918 by a series of restrictive Circulars in the 1920s. In particular, Circular 1371, published in 1925 and proposing grant reduction for school attendance of children under five, drew a storm of protest from organisations and individuals, eliciting overwhelmingly more instances of protest than resolutions supporting the government's action (Board of Education, 1918-43). The Froebel Society protested, along with many others groups representing educational interests, workers organisations and citizen groups. Amongst the resolutions urging withdrawal was one from a combined branch, the Bradford Froebel Society and Child Study Association, which was affiliated to both parent organisations. The wording of many resolutions was identical or departed slightly from a formulaic script, showing that the responses were coordinated.

### **1.2.3 Status: opportunities for women in organisations**

Previous chapters have shown how Froebelian women were entering the mainstream, gaining professional status and developing expertise through employment as inspectors in central and local government, and as Board of Education committee members. Organisational structures in the female-dominated NSA, as in the Froebel Society, also provided important opportunities for women to gain experience and achieve status, both as key post holders and as their mouthpiece in the political arena. An example was Ostle who played a key role in inter-organisational communications, in particular between the Froebel Society and the NSA. She also represented the Society as a witness for the 1933 Consultative Committee. Significantly, the organisation which claimed to view the child through a scientific lens, the CSS, had a much larger male membership but organisational records showed that female Froebelians came to occupy official posts.

## **2. The Froebel Society and other organisations: correspondence, representation and joint ventures**

### **2.1 Correspondence and representation**

The Society's Minutes and Annual Reports identify the impressive range of organisations with which it communicated on a wide variety of issues, and the frequent requests for representatives on committees or for delegates for conferences. This linked with the original aims of the Society set out in its first Annual Report: 'Correspondence with similar associations' was the fifth of its means of furthering its aims (Froebel Society, 1875, p.6). Headings to Annual Reports showed the importance of announcing its association with other organisations: 'Froebel Society of Great Britain and Ireland in alliance with the Teachers' Guild, the Bedford Froebel Association, and the King Alfred School Society' (Froebel Society, 1906).

The Froebel Society corresponded with organisations representing working women, particularly those advocating nursery schools, including the Women's Industrial Council, Mothers' Union and, most notably, the National Union of Women Workers [NUWW]. Miss Julian, Head Mistress of Tunbridge Wells High School, represented the Society at the 1906 Annual Meeting of the NUWW. In 1907 Margaret Wroe, Principal of Manchester Kindergarten Training College, was chosen to represent the Froebel Society on the Union's Council, while Elsie Murray served as representative on its Education Committee. Murray and Wroe were active in the revisionist debate taking place at this time; Wroe's critical account of provision for the 'Babies' in infants' schools was published in *Child Life* in 1905. In 1917, three members of the Froebel Society were elected to the Union's Executive Committee.

Examples of appointment of delegates to represent the Society on other bodies included Maria Findlay and Katharine Philips to the 1908 Congress General Organizing Committee of the Second International Congress on School Hygiene. Findlay was an active promoter of Froebelian concerns in a number of arenas following her return from America where she studied under Charles McMurry, promoter of the Herbartian principle of a correlated curriculum, G. Stanley Hall, and John Dewey (Findlay 1914).

Findlay was also appointed to the Organizing Committee of the International Congress for the Development of Drawing and Art Teaching in 1906 and was joined on the committee in 1908 by Margaret McMillan. In 1908, Council announced its representatives for the First International Moral Education Congress (Brown Smith and Murray) and the Third International Congress on Home Education (Lilian James). The views of Froebelian witnesses to the 1908 Consultative Committee showed that moral and home education were key concerns. How they translated into practice is discussed in the account of free kindergartens in Chapter Seven.

Despite these connections the Society did not agree to all requests for support. In 1936 the National Council of Women [formerly, NUWW], wrote to suggest affiliation; no practical details were recorded but the suggestion was rejected as the Society saw few benefits from such a move (Froebel Society. Minutes XII, 10<sup>th</sup> December 1936). Evidence showed rejection sometimes surrounded politically-motivated suggestions, such as in 1908 when the Froebel Society rejected requests from the National Union of Women's Suffrage Society and National Women's Social and Political Union to join the suffrage demonstration in June as the issue was 'outside the scope of the Society's work' (Froebel Society. Minutes X, May 1908). The Society's participation was sought in 1912 for a protest meeting in connection with a suffrage resolution passed by the Union. Council Minutes recorded that 'Mr Montefiore ...explained that he had not thought it advisable to call a Special Meeting of the Council to consider the question' (Froebel Society. Minutes X, p.111). The Society had a long history of engagement in political debate and agitation with regard to education of young children. Although individual members, such as McMillan, may have supported suffrage there is no discussion of the issue in the archives; on this occasion Montefiore's pre-emptive action obviated the opportunity for debate but the Minutes recorded no dissension from the line he adopted. Froebelian conceptions of professional role suggested an 'equal but different' stance in feminist politics, in line with that taken by the Ladies Committee of the National Union of Teachers and, to some extent, by the more militant National Union of Women Teachers (Copelman 1996; Oram 1996). However, there is some evidence of an unwillingness to actively pursue equality; when approached by the NUWT for support on a

proposal for equal pay the Society refused but no reasons were recorded (Froebel Society. Minutes XI, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1929).

The Society did not always grant requests for representatives. In 1905 the Propaganda Committee considered a request by the Royal Institute of Public Health to send a delegate to its congress but rejected it (Froebel Society. GPC Minutes, June 1905). Whether the Society's refusal was on social, political or ideological grounds can only be speculated. It rarely gave reasons for rejection, although in some instances it cited failure to find a representative.

## **2.2 Froebelians and the 'house of education'**

Despite the Froebel Society's rejection of some requests, this was a period when cross-organisational coordination of effort on educational issues became a practical reality, through the work of the CEA and through lobbying against education cuts in the 1920s. In November 1932, association between the Froebel Society and the NSA, NEF and the Home and School Council [HSC] took physical form in shared accommodation at 29 Tavistock Square. The HSC was formed in 1929 to co-ordinate parent-teacher circles, parents' unions and child study circles with Ishbel MacDonald, daughter of Ramsay MacDonald, as its first President (Anon 1930a); it was closely associated with the English section of the NEF and its activities absorbed by it in 1953. The HSC's aims were consonant with Froebel's intentions in promoting women's study circles in the 1830s and 40s. One notable Froebelian involved in the work of the HSC was Susan Isaacs, who edited a series of pamphlets for the Council in the mid-1930s. Descriptions of this new enterprise were enthusiastic: '[t]his house of education, as it may well be called, is now a real centre for teachers, parents and visitors from home and abroad' (Anon 1933a, p.5). This physical grouping brought advantages to members of the three societies (Della Porta and Diani 1999); the library was now 'probably one of the most comprehensive libraries of its kind in London...It includes as well the library of the N.S.A., the members of which can avail themselves of the same facilities as those of the Froebel Society' (ibid). Financial considerations also underpinned the move to shared accommodation; the Froebel Society was undergoing a particularly difficult period and Montefiore financed the move to new premises (Froebel Society, 1933).

Beatrice Ensor, Organising Secretary of the Theosophical Education Trust, was the driving force in the foundation of the NEF in 1921; her report on the three day housewarming event held at Tavistock Square in November 1932 recorded that 300-400 people attended on the first afternoon with a steady flow of visitors thereafter (New Education Fellowship, Minutes, December 1932 ). The nursery school was the central topic of speeches, with contributions from key figures in the HSC and NSA. Ishbel Macdonald spoke at a session hosted by Marjorie Allen (Lady Allen of Hurtwood); Margaret Wintringham discussed the preventative work which nursery schools could achieve. Susan Isaacs' topic was the role of the NEF 'in the task of popularizing psychological knowledge' (New Education Fellowship, 1932). Isaacs identified the significance of the new shared accommodation as 'facilitating the pooling of experience' and 'an event in the progress of educational thought' (ibid). In 1932, the CSS decided to seek accommodation at Tavistock Square, entailing a move from premises shared with the Royal Sanitary Institute for thirty years. Minutes recorded that:

[i]t was felt...that a more central position was desirable, and that the Society would gain substantial benefits by joining forces with the four educational societies already in occupation of the large house at 29, Tavistock Square. This building was becoming a busy educational and social centre, and was becoming known to a wide circle of teachers and students...(CSS, December 1932; March 1933)

This showed how highly the physical grouping was regarded by an organisation which was also struggling for membership in a period of financial depression. However, despite the physical proximity, how far the physical grouping led to closer coordination is debateable. Little reference was made to Froebel or kindergarten education in *New Era*, journal of the NEF, or in accounts of new education (e.g. Boyd and Rawson 1965). Initially, theosophical literature showed interest in Froebel (Brehony to Read, private communication, August 2011); a spiritual conception of human nature was a shared concern, however Montessori's interest in theosophy (Wilson 1985) came to be matched by Ensor's and Annie Besant's advocacy of Montessori (Wylie 2008).

### 2.3 The Anglo-American conference, June 1929

A significant instance of co-operation between the Froebel Society, NEF, NSA and Montessori Society led to the jointly-organised English-American Conference on Nursery School, Kindergarten and Primary Education in June 1929. A visiting group of American teachers and teacher-trainers seem to have initiated this; prime movers in its organisation were the NEF and Froebel Society, whose members able to attend all sessions of the two day event (Froebel Society. Minutes XI; Committee Minutes III, October 1928 to October 1929). Members of the NSA and Montessori Society were entitled to attend only those sessions organised by their societies. English speakers presented jointly with representatives of American institutions including Teachers College, Columbia University; Yale; Bryn Mawr; Merrill-Palmer School, Detroit (Director, Edna White) and Teachers College, Wisconsin (Caroline Barbour, President of the International Kindergarten Union). Each English organisation took charge of different areas of discussion. A session on the educational aims for unified programmes was organised by the NEF, with Philip Ballard as speaker. American delegates included Lucy Clouser and Chloe Milliken, authors of *Kindergarten Primary Activities based on Community Life* (1929), which was cited by Froebelian writers in the 1930s and favourably reviewed in *Child Life*. The nursery school session was chaired by de Lissa, with Owen as the English speaker. The Froebel Society arranged the concluding session on 'Kindergarten to Primary: the curriculum and teaching technique to accomplish unified programmes', in which Brown Smith was the English speaker. This session was chaired not by the head of a Froebelian private school but by Florence Webb, Headmistress of Haverstock Hill Infant School, suggesting the distance travelled from the Society's origins in middle class kindergartens. No reports of the session have been located. The NSA merely reported large attendance at all meetings (NSA, 1944).

In this thesis the focus is on developments in the U.K.; the transnational dimension of the Froebel movement is not directly explored. As this conference showed, transatlantic connections (Nawrotzki 2005; Nawrotzki 2007) were important conduits for shared discussion of common concerns; in this case it may represent American interest in English initiatives, possibly in interpretations of Dewey and

implementation of project methods, but apart from a letter of thanks from the American organisers to the NEF which thanked the three British organisations no other action seems to have followed.

### **3. The Nursery School Association: a challenge for ‘voice’**

Froebelian hegemony as sole experts in the field of early childhood education was challenged early in the century by Montessori's new pedagogical model. A further threat was the reformulation of the Froebelian kindergarten as the ‘nursery school’; the model was the Froebelian free kindergarten, but the new designation marked a shift away from direct association with the Froebelian model, albeit that Murray claimed that Emilie Michaelis originated the term in her 1891 translation of Poesche's Froebel's *Letters* (Murray [1919]). When the NSA was founded in 1923 the challenge crystallised; it lay not in not so much in pedagogy as in status as ‘voice’ for the education of young children. Issues of competition for resources (members and their fees) and overlapping of work recur in archives of the Froebel Society, the NSA and the CSS (Diani 1992; Della Porta and Diani 1999; Crossley 2002).

#### **3.1 The Nursery School Association: aims and membership**

Grace Owen and Margaret Eggar's summary of the NSA's development from 1923-1944 (1944), has been supplemented for this thesis by evidence from the NSA archives in the British Library of Political and Economic Science, including Annual Reports and membership lists. The first published document, in 1924, stated the objects of the NSA and listed officials and membership to February 1924. Its primary object was to secure effective working of Clause 19 of the Education Act of 1918, authorising LEAs to open nursery schools. Secondly, it aimed to promote opportunities for discussion and to focus public opinion on issues relating to the nursery school movement. To achieve these aims the NSA sought to co-operate with other organisations concerned with young children; it acted quickly to do so. A long-standing connection with the World Conference of Education Associations was formed when the NSA affiliated to it in 1925, on the grounds of the prominence given to pre-school education in its



programme (NSA, 1925). In that year it also affiliated to the International Child Welfare Association and reported ongoing discussions with the Froebel Society, with a view to 'co-operation and economy of administration' (ibid, p.8). The NSA also affiliated to the National Council of Women [NCW; formerly, NUWW], and the Workers Educational Association [WEA], both of which were regular correspondents with the Froebel Society. In 1929, the NSA, represented by its President, Mrs H.J. Eveleigh, de Lissa and Owen, met Mrs St Aubyn, President, and three members of the National Society of Day Nurseries [NSDN] to discuss possible co-operation (NSA, 1929). The outcome was agreement to meet to discuss means of furthering 'continuity of care and education in early childhood' (ibid, p, 10), and to avoid overlap of work; merger finally took place until 1973. The NSDN had been founded in 1906 and possibly experienced competition for membership, and consequently finances, from the NSA, albeit that phrasing of the agreement may reflect differing emphasis of focus in the organisations (Diani 1992a). The Froebel Society cited overlap of work in the field of parent-school cooperation when discussing whether to affiliate with the Home and School Council in 1929 (Froebel Society. Minutes XI, 10<sup>th</sup> October 1929).

The NSA reported its move to 'the house of education' in Tavistock Place in 1932 enthusiastically, as it was by Froebelians: '[t]his development...will be a great strength to each Association concerned' (NSA, 1932, p.12). Evidence from the Froebel Society records shows that positive public pronouncements were sometimes at odds with concerns expressed in private Council and committee meetings, for example about the viability of the Society; in this case there were practical advantages to the move. An immediate consequence was that Alfred Lynch, Headmaster of West Green School, Tottenham, key figure in the English branch of the NEF and promoter of the Dalton Plan (Lynch 1925; Lynch and Rennie 1932), took over as General Organising Secretary of the NSA, consolidating its work and helping to extend its work overseas as well as within the UK. Lynch's view of English elementary schools was set out in an article in *New Era* in 1930: '[w]ith regard to methods of teaching, the influence of Froebel, Montessori and Dewey is universal. There is not one school that is not in some way affected by their ideas' (1930, p.22)

He noted, however, that schools did not implement 'pure' versions of these philosophers but that 'the principles are applied, often unconsciously, in whole or in part, in hundreds of schools' (ibid).

Membership of the NSA was open to all interested in the nursery school movement; the appeal of the NSA was consequently wider for those interested in the education of this age group than that the Froebel Society, with its specific focus on Froebelian pedagogy. This underlined the point made in the CSS Annual Report for 1932 that formation of new organisations had led to loss of membership at a time when financial constraints may have forced individuals to choose between them (Child Study Society, 1928-34, May 1933). The Committee included twelve members who were 'active workers in or for Nursery Schools', a necessarily broad requirement given the small number of nursery schools at this time. Its task was to monitor developments and propose practical action to promote the NSA's aims. The decision to hold at least one meeting outside London each year may have been in recognition of the geographical sweep of the membership. This was evident by February 1924, just seven months after the NSA's launch at Mather Training College in Manchester. The annual meeting was to be held in January in London, under the umbrella of the CEA. Membership lists were arranged geographically, a useful tool for historians assessing the extent of interest in particular regions but time-consuming for locating individuals. Key pockets of interest in 1924 represented areas connected with McMillan (Bradford), Owen (Manchester) and Hawtrey (Darlington) in the north of England; the largest contingent was in London, where McMillan and a key instigator in the formation of the NSA, Mrs H.J. Eveleigh, also worked; she provided a link with the Jellico Nursery School, opened under the auspices of the St Pancras Housing Association, in Camden Town in 1913. This organisation was responsible for the slum clearance schemes in the St Pancras area. A comparison of membership figures for 1924 and 1938 showed that the greatest expansion was in these areas, with the addition of Birmingham, where the NSA's first branch opened in 1927, and Edinburgh. In both cities concerns for young children resulted in the opening of a number of free kindergartens in the first decade of the century (Hardy 1912; Swanson 1975; Brehony 2000a; Brehony 2004a).

By December 1925, NSA membership stood at 344 compared to 236 in the previous year, with a particularly large increase in Scottish representation to 91. Analysis of affiliation (where given), and of addresses linked to particular organisations and colleges, showed that representation from training colleges was strong, with Principals and individual staff listed as members. This suggested that those working for professionalization of teachers were keen to engage with this developing area of expertise. Teachers from nursery and infant schools and those working in settlements were also well represented. Further, many Froebelians appeared in the 1924 list and in those published subsequently, including Clara Grant and Kathleen Stokes (Somers Town Nursery School); Grant was active in the CSS but did not play a key role in the NSA. An important political link for the nascent organisation was with the Labour Party through Ishbel MacDonald, also active in the Home and School Council, while her father, Ramsay MacDonald, was a Vice President. This may have been a political statement on Ramsay MacDonald's part; papers in the National Archive showed that Conservatives feared Labour would make political capital from asserting support for nursery education and this had an impact on their strategy:

Everyone is agreed as to the value of Nursery schools and in view of the fact that the Labour Party will certainly try to make some splash with their advocacy of those schools at the next election, it is just as well that our Party should not leave this field entirely to them (Eustace Percy, Board of Education, 15<sup>th</sup> May 1928)

Party politics did not appear to play a part within the NSA's own structures; instead women combined to work across party lines to advocate for nursery schools, notably Wintringham, Ishbel MacDonald and Nancy Astor. McMillan's seeming rejection of her Socialist allegiance in working closely with Astor, as she had previously with Morant, was described as an 'apostasy' (Steedman 1990).

### **3.2 Membership of the Nursery School Association and National Froebel**

#### **Foundation: comparisons in 1938 and 1946**

This thesis examines the period up to 1939 but availability of data for both organisations resulted in the choice of 1938 for a comparison of numbers, and 1938 [NSA] and 1946 (NFF), for named individuals. Membership data for the Froebel Society was difficult to locate; in comparison NSA Annual Reports made charting of membership straightforward. In 1938, NSA membership was 3489, of whom 2467 were members of branches. The figure of 1022 for Headquarter members was in comparison to a Froebel Society membership of 950 (excluding branch members) in the same year. However, given that the Froebel Society's remit had been extended to include junior schools in 1917, it could be argued that the Froebel Society's membership was lower in relative terms than the figure suggested.

The NSA published a list of its members in Annual Reports, with a separate publication in 1938. The Froebel Society, (National Froebel Foundation from 1938), published a full list of its members only in 1946. This list was arranged in one alphabetical sequence whereas the NSA's list was divided up into individual branch listings, making comparison of the two lists difficult. Comparison of London members can only be partially successful because of the eight year gap which included World War Two, with its possible consequences on personal lives. Nonetheless some names appeared on both lists, including Emma Stevinson, Superintendent of Rachel McMillan Nursery School, Kate C. Brown (née McCracken; who trained at FEI (1905-06) and lectured on education in the college from 1923, and Eglantyne Mary Jebb, Principal of FEI. Other names appeared only in the NSA list but were closely associated with the Froebel Society and/or NFU or with FEI. In this category were Lily Reed and Freda Hawtrey. Some of those on the NSA list who were key figures in the Froebel movement had died by 1946. These included Esther Lawrence, Henrietta Brown Smith and Frances Roe, all of whom died in 1944. This comparison inevitably excludes those who did not join either organisation but may have been active as part of the wider network.

### **3.3 Froebelians as officers of the Nursery School Association**

Many central figures in the NSA were, or had been, active members of the Froebel Society and the NFU. They played important roles in furthering, and in some instances revising, Froebel pedagogy in training colleges and schools, in representing Froebelian views to government committees and through publications. Lillian de Lissa, who played a key role in discussions with the Froebel Society, was originally an advocate of Froebelian principles, but came to adopt a Montessorian stance towards the education of young children (Jones 2006, originally published 1981).

Esther Lawrence was a Vice-Principal of the NSA from its foundation; Elsie Murray, then a Council member for the NFU, became a Vice President in 1930. The Annual Report recorded that Murray's 'championship of the Nursery school so long as 25 years ago was recognised with gratitude' (Nursery School Association, 1930, p.7). Brown Smith was co-opted on to the General Committee in 1932, joining Susan Isaacs, while Hawtrey served on the General and Executive committees. Hawtrey, like Lawrence, had also been a member of the NSA from its earliest days. Frances Roe was a member of the Committee of the Council of Head Teachers of Infant Schools and Margaret Eggar was active in the Manchester branch. Another form of Froebelian involvement in the NSA was through local Froebel Society branches which became Associated Groups, just as some branches joined with local Child Study Society branches.

#### **3.3.1 The first President: Margaret McMillan 1923 - 1929**

McMillan became first President of the NSA on its foundation in 1923. McMillan had proclaimed the virtues of Froebelian pedagogy in the 1890s while a member of the Bradford School Board, before she joined the Froebel Society Council in 1903. Her description of a visit to FEI in 1899 with other members of the School Board was couched in Froebelian terminology: the college provided 'the frame-work of a tranquil and harmonised environment where the need of the sub-conscious life were abundantly recognised' (1899, p.117). In line with Froebelian principles this was no place for formal

work: 'And the three R's? Where do they come in? I am sure I don't know exactly; and it really doesn't matter, so long as they don't come in too early' (ibid). McMillan noted that FEI's teacher-training included botany, biology, zoology and psychology; these were 'the sciences concerning LIFE [sic]. They receive a special education, you see, and this is necessary. A young child is educated through Life – Life in all its forms' (ibid). As discussed previously, McMillan became an active promoter of the Froebel Society; her practice in her open-air nursery school at Deptford was firmly based on Froebelian pedagogy (McMillan 1930; McMillan [c1923]). Although McMillan focused on health and welfare considerations and, like Montessori, drew on the work of the French doctor Edouard Seguin, she also stressed the importance of addressing intellectual development for realising individual potential (McMillan [c1923]) and in the interests of social renewal (McMillan 1930). McMillan was still lecturing on Froebel at the Society's branch meetings in the 1920s (McMillan 1926) but, like Owen, published in *New Era*, rather than *Child Life*, suggesting a distancing from the Froebel Society, if not the broader movement.

McMillan's powerful personality and strongly expressed views on nursery classes, which were in line with the view of Froebelians, created difficulties for the NSA:

McMillan felt that tolerance of the inadequate nursery classes of the time would so endanger the future of Nursery Schools, that they must be condemned outright, as indeed they were by her on more than one public occasion. This unfortunate difference of outlook between the President and the majority of Nursery School Association Committee caused frequent misunderstanding of the policy of the Association (NSA 1944, p.12)

McMillan resigned from the NSA in 1929; Eveleigh became President in her place. This event was mediated by McMillan's letter of good wishes sent to the Nursery School Association shortly before her death in 1931. McMillan seemed to have qualities in line with the Weberian conception of charismatic personalities (Weber 1947), however, the opposition to McMillan within the NSA presents a challenge to Melucci's argument that charismatic leaders reduce their followers to acolytes lacking agency (Morris and Staggenborg 2004).

### 3.3.2 The first Hon Sec.: Grace Owen, 1923 - 1931

Grace Owen was the NSA's first Honorary Secretary; although she stepped down from this post in 1931 she continued as Honorary Adviser and became President in 1941. Like McMillan, who received a C.B.E., Owen's work was recognised by the award of the OBE. Owen took a Froebelian stance towards the education of nursery school children, evident in the chapter written jointly with Margaret Eggar in 1920; they wrote '[t]here will be no set lessons, but the children will live as far as possible with nature' (Owen 1920, p.59). Alongside the focus on Froebelian activities, they suggested that the nursery school should become 'one of the great humanizing forces in the country' (ibid, p.55); this also chimed with Froebel's intentions for the kindergarten. Owen's proposals for training nursery school Superintendents were similar to those delineated by Froebel in his description of the duties of kindergarten teachers at Blankenburg (Froebel 1842) and with McMillan's conceptions (McMillan 1919). Emphasis was on the practical aspects of the work: care of the children's health and hygiene, care and preparation of the premises, contacts with the children's homes and, additionally to Froebel's conception, with services provided in clinics, hospitals and other welfare centres; this represented the development of children's services since the 1840s. McMillan's and Owen's holistic views were arguably shaped by Froebel's approach to young children's development.

Owen agreed to write a chapter on the nursery school for the Froebel Society's jubilee pamphlet *Then and Now*, in 1925. Her contribution was not forthcoming and the chapter was eventually written by Kathleen Stokes; no reasons were given for this in the Minutes. Writing in her capacity of Honorary Secretary of the NSA, Owen published articles in *New Era* in 1928 and 1930 (Owen 1928; Owen 1930); the journal also published two special editions on nursery schools in July 1927 and in May 1931. Owen positioned the nursery school in the centre of an axis with home and infant welfare institutions on one hand and the school on the other (Owen 1928). This position was occupied by the kindergarten, although only the free kindergartens emphasised connections with welfare institutions. Arguably, the kindergarten had a clearer conception of the need for a phased passage to schools

through the transition class. Evidence for difference in views about training is found in correspondence between Ostle and Owen in 1925, discussed below. Despite this, Owen remained in regular contact with the Society; she sought advice on NSA branch formation in 1926 (Froebel Society. Minutes XI, 30 September 1926), and was invited to re-join Council in October (ibid, 8 October 1926). In her letter rejecting the invitation Owen cited the concentrated effort her own work required but expressed sympathy with the Society's work. The NFF offered a seat on its newly-formed Governing Body to the NSA in 1938. Owen agreed to take this role, giving her the opportunity to represent the NSA's interests; it also suggested the continuing status of the Froebel organisation, that a voice on its Governing Body was still regarded as important. The enhancement of Owen's personal status cannot be discounted as a motivation for her acceptance of the role.

#### **4. The question of amalgamation**

The Froebel Society sought closer relationships with other organisations from 1900 to 1939; terms used in the records were amalgamation, affiliation, merger and federation. These suggest differing degrees of relationship and implications for retention of identity and autonomy. The Society was itself approached by organisations proposing affiliation, for example by the Workers Educational Association in 1928; the Society rejected this request, on the grounds that 'it was not advisable' (Froebel Society. Minutes XI, 8<sup>th</sup> November, 1928); in 1937 the Society also rejected affiliation with the NCW in 1937. This may have been because, given the Froebel Society's class composition, it did not see these workers' organisations as natural allies. Some practical proposals were put forward and implemented, for example the Federal Lectures Board spread the organisational burden and financial costs of putting together lecture programmes; however, no definitions of what was entailed in each process was given and no legal documents setting out the implications were found during the research. Amalgamation was the term used in the particular discussions which took place between the Froebel Society and the NSA in 1925. The question of amalgamation raised conflictual issues of competition for resources and status and identity which have been shown to be common to social movements (Diani 1992a). The



Society approached the NSA in 1925, only two years after its formation. The role played by Geraldine Ostle was central in the negotiations. Ostle was on the Committee of the NSA from 1923 and was active in pursuing Froebelian interests on a number of fronts: as editor of *Child Life*, governor of the NFU and FEI, and as secretary and librarian of the Froebel Society. As secretary, Ostle was responsible for correspondence; letters which passed between the Society and the NSA, under Ostle's signature, suggested that she used her position to advance her own concerns. In February 1925, she criticised Owen's proposed training scheme for nursery school teachers: 'I do not expect to have a hearing but I would like to put on record that it seems to me a mistake to make any training for work of this sort too long, too expensive or too technical' (NSA, 12 February 1925). She continued '[m]ore and more is it to be noticed that the scientific side of work is being emphasised to the detriment of the work that can be done by the naturally gifted, but who are unable to pass hard examinations' (ibid). Her typescript letter on the Society's headed notepaper has the manuscript comment 'unofficial'; however Owen, who had by now some twenty years' experience as a campaigner and trainer, may well have taken offence at this criticism. The argument put forward by Ostle posited a maternalist conception of professional role at odds with the case being made by other Froebelians. Although there were exceptions, which have been previously discussed, the Froebel Society had contended over many years that teachers of young children needed to be better trained than those of older children. These arguments were made by Owen to the 1908 Consultative Committee and continued into the 1930s (Wise 1932). Perhaps significant in this respect was Ostle's statement that 'I am a Froebelian before anything else. But I still feel that it should attract a different type of brain, a different sort of personality' (NSA, 12 February 1925, original emphasis).

Ostle's approach to Owen took place before she raised the question of amalgamation with the Froebel Society Council in March 1925. At this meeting Ostle expressed serious concern about the NSA's proposed new nursery school certificate, citing possible effects on applications for NFU certificates of a new award with a popular title. Her concern was not shared by others in the Society who viewed her view as 'too pessimistic' (Froebel Society, Minutes XI, 12 March 1925). Miss Storr was clear in her view, 'she did not think any form of amalgamation would be possible' (ibid). Storr's reasons were not

recorded but this mirrored earlier rejections of amalgamation in 1898 and showed the conflicting opinions such proposals aroused.

In May, de Lissa, a Vice-Chairman of the NSA, wrote to Owen reporting on a meeting held with Lawrence, Ostle and Miss Coutts. She presented the Froebelian case as one of regret that 'a new Association be formed doing what they consider to be the same work as the Froebel Society had been engaged in for so long' (NSA, de Lissa, 13th May 1925). In her meeting with Lawrence *et al* de Lissa argued that the nature of nursery school work was different and attracted 'both Montessori and Froebel enthusiasts, who in all probability would not join together in the name of the Froebel Society!!' (ibid). Implicit in de Lissa's argument was a conception of nursery education as an amalgamation of the two pedagogies. Agreement was reached at this meeting to consider formation of a League of Childhood, the title suggested by Lawrence, which could embrace a diverse range of organisations. Such an organisation could create 'a forward movement in the interests of young children' (ibid). De Lissa also reported the Froebelian concerns, expressed by Ostle to the Society's Council in March, regarding the training proposals which the NSA was drawing up for nursery school staff; these were perceived to threaten competition with their own schemes and to imply that the NSA wanted to develop as a training and examining body. Given the tardy development of nursery school training by the NFU, which introduced its Nursery School Diploma only in 1932, a year after FEI's initiative, the NSA can be seen as justified in developing its own training.

Ostle wrote to Owen again after the meeting in May, on the Society's headed paper but without stating that this was an unofficial approach, expressing in first person terms her desire for amalgamation of the two societies. She stated 'I am also ambitious (or practical, which is it?) enough to hope to get the Child Study Association, the Montessori and the Day Nurseries to amalgamate' (Nursery School Association, Ostle, 15th May 1925). Ostle reported that in the meeting with de Lissa the latter had suggested that 'our name 'Froebel' would be a great drawback and I agree that the name nursery school is a happier one for these times' (ibid). These letters have been interpreted as a begging approach by the Society (Nawrotzki 2006). An alternative view suggests that the use of 'I' is significant

in Ostle's letters; she wrote that although some members were in favour she had not yet obtained the permission of Council to pursue this approach. These letters indicate that, although the Council gave her permission to open discussion, it was Ostle who was driving the process without presenting her letters to Council for approval. No sufficient evidence has emerged to establish whether she habitually acted in this way. An indication of the power politics at play emerged in de Lissa's admission of the significance of the position of the Froebel Society; she described it to her NSA colleagues as powerful:

[O]ne knows that co-operation makes for greater strength than individual effort. I think, however, that the matter would have to be handled very carefully, as we have to prevent a young and small Association, such as ours is, from being swallowed up or stereotyped by something as powerful as the Froebel (ibid)

The use of the terms 'powerful' and 'stereotyped' in these private documents is significant evidence of the positive and negative ways the Society was viewed. It showed, too, how discussion of amalgamation, which would entail the creation of a unified organisational structure from previously independent constituent parts, raised fears regarding identity; CSS Minutes referred to loss of identity if amalgamated with a 'larger and more successful society' (CSS, 1928-1934, March 1932). It would entail loss of organisational autonomy and ability to pursue its agendas as it thought best. This further reinforces the point about competition between organisations with 'compatible definitions of the issues and some degree of identity' (Della Porta and Diani 1999, p.125). It is conceivable that de Lissa, as a central figure in a rapidly growing organisation, was reluctant to see her own role, as well as its independence, compromised; there may also have been some personal animosity between the women involved, although no evidence emerged to support this. Yet some form of joint action could be beneficial for all parties, in a time of financial constraint; Lily Reed wrote to Owen in October 1925 to express her support for some form of federation, particularly with regard to lectures and, possibly, a common journal. She suggested it would aid publicity and membership, concluding 'I feel at present we are working too much by ourselves' (NSA, Reed, 4 October 1925).

Evidence that the NSA was struggling in 1935 was its request that the Froebel Society take over its Employment Registry of nursery school teachers, which was to be disbanded. The Society had a long-established agency of kindergarten teachers and it agreed to include those on the NSA's register, subject to acceptance of the Society's terms and conditions (Froebel Society. Minutes XII, 12<sup>th</sup> December 1935). The particular problem for the NSA in 1935 was the forthcoming end of its grant from the Carnegie Foundation, coupled with the demands of the Registry on its office (NSA, 1935). In 1939, Brown Smith asked the NFF to help the NSA if forced to vacate its premises because of the war (NFF. Board Minutes, 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1939). She described the NSA as a 'relatively young one' and dependent largely on subscriptions for funds; as a consequence, 'its future was very insecure' (ibid). The NFF agreed to help if required, subject to payment for heating and lighting. Given the financial vicissitudes which the Froebel Society experienced in this period, and its reliance on the generosity of benefactors such as Montefiore in the absence of adequate funding from membership fees to finance its many projects, Brown Smith's request showed startling myopia, but also that she regarded the new NFF as strongly grounded..

At the end of the period the Froebel Society and the NSA were still operating independently; the only amalgamation that had taken place was that of the Froebel Society with the National Froebel Union to form the National Froebel Foundation.

## **5. Conclusion**

This chapter has shown how Froebelians developed relationships with some organisations through differing levels of involvement, from representation at annual meetings to full-scale attempts to amalgamate, and rejected closer ties with others. Froebel Society Minutes and publications indicated openness to new groups and ideas but the attitude to formal links varied. Arguably, this accorded with perceptions of the ideological appropriateness of such links. The Society rejected amalgamation with the Sloyd Association, predecessor to the Educational Handwork Association [EHA], in 1889. It first

raised the possibility of amalgamation with the CSS 1920 and again in 1925, now also with the recently formed NSA. Subsequently, the Society approached the EHA in 1925, along with parents' associations. Individual members were particularly active in the negotiations discussed here and personal agendas and educational philosophies seem to have played a part. The Froebel Society Council gave Ostle permission (albeit *post hoc*) to approach the NSA, however, it is conceivable that the tone of her initial approach may not have received sanction. Ostle's actions suggest additional interpretations of attempts to amalgamate are possible to those of financial necessity (Nawrotzki 2006); although documents referred to monetary savings, Ostle's motivation was arguably altruistic, based on her personal interpretation of the fundamental importance of 'trying to help the young child' (NSA, 15 May 1925). This is not to infer that in rejecting Ostle's approach de Lissa *lacked* an altruistic impulse, merely to suggest that her interpretation of what was best for young children may have been different. This is suggested by her view of the Froebel Society as 'stereotyped' and reflected her move away from advocacy of Froebelian pedagogy in favour of Montessori.

Evidence presented in this chapter suggested that other forces were also at work which reflected the particularly vibrant zeitgeist, characterised by a desire for cooperation and coordination of effort in the struggle for educational reform and advancement. This was shown in the work of the CEA, which, although beginning pre-World War One, was arguably strengthened by the war experience. The attack on educational reform posed by the financial cutbacks in the 1920s and 30s, which served to limit the implementation the 1918 legislation, effectively increased the need for a combined response. However, desire to retain identity and to pursue particular concerns, led to rejection of amalgamation by the societies. Arguably this supports the characterisation of the Froebel Society as a sect (Raymont 1937; Brehony 1987). What emerged was a looser association, amounting to little more than agreement to jointly organise lecture series. Della Porta and Diani's theorisation of inter-organisational dynamics (1999) provides a lens for interpreting the initiatives and practice discussed here. The Froebel Society and NSA shared 'compatible definitions of the issues and some degree of identity' (ibid, p.125); occupying premises at Tavistock Square no doubt facilitated 'exchange of information and the pooling of resources for specific projects' (ibid, p.124-5), evidenced by the joint library and the lecture series.

However, common membership indicated competition 'for the same support base' (ibid); in a period of financial recession this was to prove problematic: the Child Study Society was near bankruptcy in 1939.

The NSA had a significant number of Froebelians in its ranks but the organisation appealed to a wider range of women interested in nursery education, possibly because it did not have a unique pedagogical label and was not associated with an élite, as the Froebel Society was. Conversely, the Froebel Society's educational interests were broader, extending to the junior school period. Possibilities for women to establish personal status existed in these organisations, both internally, as organisers, and as external voices, on the Consultative Committee and in private discussions with the Board of Education and with the LEAs, as in the LCC meetings, as discussed in Chapters Three and Four. The NSA was less dependent on male benefactors than either the Froebel Society or the Child Study Society and failure to amalgamate was advantageous to ambitious women as more opportunities for personal advancement were retained. Each organisation gave women post-holders the chance to develop managerial skills and to achieve status as spokespersons on external bodies, including government committees. The work of some women was recognised by the award of honours, as in the case of inspectors discussed previously. Owen received the OBE and McMillan the CBE; McMillan was also made a Companion of Honour shortly before her death in 1931. Retention of independence also enabled organisations to ensure their own particular 'voice' was not lost as they responded to the succession of government Circulars in the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, voices presenting different perspectives may have been more effective in keeping nursery education and the reform of infant education on the political agenda (Della Porta and Diani op.cit.). In this respect, the wider age range represented by the Froebel Society led to an invitation to submit evidence to the Consultative Committee's investigation of primary schools (Board of Education, 1931).

The significance of links between the Froebel Society and the NSA, and evident in CSS archives, were the implications for professionalization of nursery and infant school teachers. Development of branches of the different organisations provided opportunities for infant and nursery school teachers

across the country to hear about new ideas in the relatively informal environment of local social gatherings. These ideas, characterised as 'progressive', were providing a sound underpinning to training in colleges by 1939 (Selleck 1972, p.121). This is explored further in Chapter Six. Evidence has shown that Froebelian training college Principals, including Lawrence (FEI), Hawtrey (Darlington), McMillan (Deptford), Owen (Mather College, Manchester), *inter alia*, were active participants in organisations. This chapter has focused on the NSA; Minutes and London Council Minutes of the CSS showed that involvement in the early phase of child study organisation identified by Brehony (2009a) continued to the end of the period. How these opportunities for cross-fertilization of ideas fed into development of Froebelian pedagogy is discussed in Chapter Eight.

Despite the difficulties and tensions, the inter-organisational relationships discussed here supported Froebelians and others in pressing more effectively for nursery schools and for changes in infant school teaching practices, through combined action and through development of sounder arguments grounded in dialogue. The Froebel Society was no longer the lone voice it had been up to 1900. The discussion of Ostle's personal role in Froebel Society negotiations with the NSA has challenged negative interpretations of the Society's efforts to foster closer institutional links (Nawrotzki 2006); instead, the Society's Council robustly rejected Ostle's pessimistic view. The interests of the two organisations were, in some respects, mutual, and this was recognised by de Lissa as entailing issues of power and status, but it did not lead to the demise of either organisation by 1939; at root, they were sufficiently distinct, as in the Froebelian concern with junior school education, to enable both to survive.

## Chapter Six

### Training Froebelian Teachers: The Froebel Educational Institute

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter analyses how training at the pre-eminent Froebel training college, Froebel Educational Institute [FEI], London, developed from 1900 to 1939, and how its students responded to the teaching opportunities of the period. The establishment of FEI by a group of British and international Froebelians, and early history has been previously described (Liebschner 1991; Weston 2002); Smart describes the threat its wealthy and powerful supporters posed to the Froebel college at Bedford (Smart 1982). This chapter builds on this literature showing how FEI responded to developments by establishing courses to address the need for new kinds of professional roles, and by introducing new disciplinary concepts into its curriculum. Previous chapters have shown that training college staff were active in the Froebel Society and NFU; evidence presented here demonstrates that FEI staff were no exception. The argument that Froebelians enthusiastically engaged with new ideas and dispensed with the appurtenances of orthodox practice is borne out in this analysis of FEI's training of teachers. Whatever professional routes taken by FEI students, potential existed for dissemination of Froebelian pedagogy; the chapter draws on biographical information in the *College Register* (FEI, 1951) and reminiscences by Froebel alumni on their training and lives as Froebelian teachers to show how this was achieved. Documents in the London Metropolitan Archives provided data on posts obtained by FEI students and on staffing, helping to fill lacunae in FEI archives.



## **1.1 The context for FEI's work: training colleges and progressive education**

Progressive, or New, education comprised ideas from child study, psychoanalysis and new pedagogy. The role played by training colleges in the 'steady penetration of humanising ideas' into infant schools (Board of Education, 1933, p.139), emanating from Froebel, Montessori and McMillan, was recognised by the 1933 Consultative Committee. Participation by college staff in coordinated activities in local branches of organisations, including the Froebel Society, NSA, Child Study Society and teacher unions, provided a conduit for new ideas to enter training programmes. Selleck cites representatives of theories across the educational sphere to support his argument that training colleges had become 'a haven for those who sought to spread progressive ideas and methods' (1972, p.121). Some were members of Froebel organisations (J.J. Findlay, Woods, Raymont, Owen and Evelyn Lawrence), others part of the wider Froebel movement (Isaacs, Phoebe Cusden). Others were dedicated Montessorians (E.P. Culverwell) or associated with psychological insights emerging from the child study movement (C.W. Valentine and James Drever). Lillian de Lissa's training of teachers at Gipsy Hill Training College employed an eclectic approach. De Lissa set out along a Froebelian path in Australia but trained under Montessori in Rome in 1914, gaining the Montessori Diploma. On her arrival in the U.K. in 1917 she became first Principal of Gipsy Hill, established by Belle Rennie (De Lissa 1939). Rennie was an early proponent in Britain of the Dalton Plan, an American modification by Helen Pankhurst of the Montessori pedagogy (Selleck 1972). Whether de Lissa attempted to introduce 'pure' or modified Montessori training at Gipsy Hill and in its nursery school, Rommany Road, is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, those attempting to introduce Montessori training were hampered by the control maintained by Montessori over certification. Montessori's refusal to sanction training not sanctioned by her was mirrored in her response to interpretations of her pedagogy in schools (Ballard 1937; Cunningham 2000; Brehony 2000b).

## **1.2 Developments in education for young children: the impact on training colleges**

During the period the advent of nursery schools required growing numbers of staff with knowledge of the particular needs of young children and courses to train them. Training colleges began to develop courses, including Goldsmiths, where Brown Smith lectured, Mather College, Manchester, under Grace Owen, Gipsy Hill in London, under de Lissa, and Darlington, under Freda Hawtrey. These developments fed into long-standing calls by Froebelians and teachers to end formal teaching in infant schools. Both had an impact on the curricula of the training colleges and textbooks for teachers, as discussed in Chapter Eight. Froebel training was available at a number of colleges, represented directly or indirectly on the NFU Board of Governors, as shown in Chapter Two. Stockwell and Saffron Walden were under the auspices of the British and Foreign School Society (Collins 1984). Maria Grey, under its original name, Skinner Street Training College, had taken over the Froebel Society's own training college in 1883 (Lilley 1981). It continued to maintain its strong Froebelian ethos under Alice Woods, Principal, Elsie Murray (head of the kindergarten training department and later Vice-Principal), Marie Michaelis (Mistress of Method, 1902 to 1918) and Evelyn Kenwick, Murray's successor as kindergarten trainer. Bedford Training College, like FEI, was an independent provider, founded in 1881; Smart (1982) describes the introduction of elements of Montessori and Dewey pedagogy into its training but suggests that the college did not introduce innovative courses in this period.

## **2. FEI staff: qualification and assessments**

Evidence showed that qualifications of FEI staff were rising in the period and inspections by NFU examiners and HMIs wrote positively of their abilities. Early reports and prospectuses did not refer to the staff or their qualifications; only the Principal was named. Between 1900 and 1939 FEI was inspected by the Board of Education once, in 1902 (Board of Education, 1902). The report showed how quickly FEI had gathered a competent cohort of lecturers from its foundation in 1892. It was complimentary of Lawrence's organising abilities and described her as well qualified for the work.

Qualifications of college lecturers were reported to be 'very satisfactory' with all holding NFU certificates or the Cambridge Teachers' Syndicate; nearly all were experienced teachers. Only four had less than four years teaching experience; additionally, visiting teachers of special subjects were all well qualified.

## **2.1 FEI Principals**

### **2.1.1 Emilie Michaelis: 1892 - 1901**

Emilie Michaelis, FEI's first Principal, had trained with Froebel's great-niece, Henriette Schrader Breymann (Bailey 1905) and was a founder member of the Froebel Society, thus providing a link with Froebel and the origins of the formal organization of the Froebel movement in the U.K. (Read 2003). Although her formal qualifications have not been traced, Michaelis seems to have been an inspirational Principal, if not fully au fait with the requirements of formal training. Evelyn Hope Wallace (FEI, 1894-97), Head Teacher of FEI's Practising School at Challoner Street, West Kensington, described Michaelis' presence as 'all-pervading. Her lectures were not always on the subject we expected, or given in the usual manner, but they were full of inspiration, and touched the very chords in our hearts' (cited in Read 1992, unpaginated). Christine Nance (FEI, 1897-99), subsequently married to Thomas Raymont, recorded that '[a]cademically [Michaelis's] work may not have been much good, but she was most inspiring, and I felt after being with her that my job was the most worth-while job in the world' (Nance 1988). She described the examination as 'a very trifling affair and in no way corresponded to the work we had done' (ibid). This suggests that despite NFU intentions to regularize teaching of the Froebel curriculum, Michaelis continued to maintain her own approach at FEI. Despite her formal appearance, 'dressed in black with a headdress having a long lace veil floating from it' (Nance n.d., p.107), Michaelis was humorous and willing to join in games with children and students. Despite the unconventionality which emerged in reminiscences, Michaelis was respected by students and set the college on a steady path in its early years. Although the curriculum required close acquaintance with the sequential use of the Gifts and Occupations in 1901 (FEI, 1901), this was early days for revisionist

thinking; Michaelis' interest in new ways of thinking was shown in her appointment of Maria Findlay in 1898.

### **2.1.2 Esther Ella Lawrence: 1901 - 1931**

Lawrence was appointed Principal following the resignation of Michaelis in 1901 and remained in post for the major part of the period. She entered the Froebel Society's Tavistock Place Training College at nineteen (Read 2004d); this early commitment to Froebelian principles led to close friendship with Alice Woods. In 1884, at just twenty two, she took charge of the Preparatory Department of Chiswick High School, where Woods was Head Teacher. Her subsequent post as kindergarten mistress of the kindergarten and transition classes, held in conjunction with Michaelis's college in Norland Place, gave her an association with FEI from the outset. Unlike Michaelis, Lawrence, with a secure financial base in a wealthy liberal Jewish family, 'was all for wise and almost unlimited spending' (Michaelis 1945, p.4); Michaelis's own limited financial means led her to run FEI with great caution (ibid). Lawrence's course of action was justified by the success of FEI. The need for expansion, and Lawrence's desire for a residential college, led to the move from its restricted premises at Colet Gardens, Hammersmith, to the spacious estate at Grove House Roehampton in 1921. Lawrence was involved in the other Froebel organisations as a long-standing member of the Froebel Society and its President in 1927, and also of the NFU. She wrote a number of articles for *Child Life*, amongst them her conceptions of the practical application of Froebelian principles (1904), Froebel training (1905) and nursery schools (1914).

Lawrence had a strong personal vision of social service which she tried to inculcate in trainee students and alumni. She used her annual Presidential letter in *The Link* to remind Michaelis Guild members of their social responsibilities and expressed disappointment when the response did not meet her expectations (Lawrence 1906; Lawrence 1913a). Lawrence sought to encourage students to connect with those outside the Guild, both educational and social workers (1911, p.1). Driving Lawrence may have been Jewish charitable traditions, seen also in other members of her own family; her sisters

supported the two nursery schools opened in London by Lawrence in Notting Dale and St Pancras. Obituaries stressed Lawrence's deep sympathy for poor children (Jebb 1944) and she was a member of the NSA from its foundation. When the charity Save the Children Fund was founded in 1919 she invited its founder, Eglantyne Jebb, elder cousin of the later Principal, to speak to the students, beginning an association with the charity which continued for decades. The work of her two nursery schools, discussed in Chapter Seven, addressed moral imperatives as well as providing for learning and play; in this respect Lawrence's motivations reflected the duality of purpose evident in late nineteenth century, and later, charitable initiatives (Himmelfarb 1991).

When Montessori pedagogy was introduced to the UK Lawrence, like other Froebelians, responded in lectures to teachers and in print (Lawrence 1913a; Lawrence 1913b). Although she 'welcomed any new experiment in education' (Jebb 1944, p.2) and was one of the first to obtain the apparatus and study its potential (ibid), Lawrence was critical of the limitations of Montessori pedagogy, based on experimentation with the apparatus and Montessori's rejection of imaginative play. However, she introduced students to the ideas at Michaelis Guild meetings at which the Montessori apparatus was displayed (Anon 1913). Later that year Bertram Hawker, at whose school in East Runton, Norfolk, the first Montessori conference was held in 1914, lectured to a large audience of Guild members and their friends. The writer recorded that 'the audience regarded the new system with some mistrust in so far as it appeared to be anti-Froebelian' (ibid, p.5). As shown below, she also appointed staff with Montessori qualifications, however, insufficient evidence was found to investigate how far discussion of Montessori entered the FEI curriculum. Possible evidence for an experimental stance is Nancy Catty's comment on Lawrence in her obituary of Thomas Raymont in 1953; urging innovation in face of Raymont's caution, Lawrence had responded 'education died when adventure ended (Catty 1953, p.19).

### **2.1.3 Eglantyne Mary Jebb: 1932 - 1955**

When Lawrence announced her retirement FEI Minutes provided a fascinating picture of the search for her successor. Alice Wark, elected to the FEI Council in 1928 on Montefiore's recommendation, began the process by sounding out a former colleague in the Inspectorate, Miss M.C.L. Greaves, who had worked with Owen at Mather Training College prior to her appointment as an HMI. However, Greaves preferred to remain at the Board of Education (FEI. Minutes 1926-42, March, May 1931). Surprisingly, given evidence in FEI's archives of increasing numbers of its staff gaining first or higher degrees it was decided that it was 'not absolutely necessary' to have a degree but it was 'an important secondary point' (ibid, May 1931). The primary requirements were not set out. Following enquiries by members of the Governing Body fifteen candidates were proposed; of these five were chosen to attend for interview. Miss Bazely, MA. Oxon, Principal of Bishop Otter College, and also briefly of the Home and Colonial College, had previously been recommended to Lawrence by Rose Monkhouse, HMI for training colleges; she had been 'favourably impressed' by her (ibid, June 1931). On this occasion, she was also recommended by, amongst others, Winifred Mercier, Principal of Whitelands. Bazely seemed a strong candidate and expressed 'greatest interest' in the post, but possibly weakened her position by stating that she did not think she could leave her post in Chichester until September 1932, at the earliest. One candidate, Miss Farnell, BA, Dean and Librarian of Somerville, had not been approached as Montefiore had heard that she was 'delicate'; it was decided to make further enquiries about her (ibid). The reasons were unstated but this was probably to ensure she had sufficient stamina for the task of managing the college. Lillian de Lissa was also selected; however, her partial capitulation to Montessori pedagogy as Principal of Gipsy Hill Training College made her a surprising candidate. De Lissa did not have a degree and was married but possibly her active role in the NSA made her an attractive candidate and she was described as 'very able and well-educated' and recommended by Monkhouse and Mercier (ibid). The final list of interviewees differed; while Bazeley and de Lissa remained, others withdrew their applications or were not willing to stand and additional candidates now included Eglantyne Mary Jebb. After 'prolonged discussion' Jebb was proposed by Llewellyn Davies, and seconded by Alice Woods (ibid, July 1931). Jebb was educated at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford,

and achieved a first class Honours degree in English. She gained a Teacher's Diploma at St Mary's College before teaching at Somerville and Birmingham; she had also been a Visiting Lecturer at Wellesley College in Massachusetts from 1928-29.

Under Jebb close links were established with Save the Children Fund [SCF], for which she was Vice-President and Chair of its Nursery Committee. In the years following her appointment up to 1939 the country remained in severe recession. Jebb actively promoted emergency open air nurseries (Brehony and Nawrotzki 2003) in areas of great poverty, for which a special committee worked under the auspices of the SCF and in association with the NSA (NSA, 1933).

Unlike Lawrence, Jebb was not appointed a Vice-President of the NSA and did not take an active role in its affairs, although the organisation's first summer school was held at Templeton, FEI's hostel, in 1937. Its success led to a return visit in 1938 when additional rooms were made available in Grove House, on the FEI campus (NSA, 1938). In that year Owen joined the Governing Body of the newly-formed NFF. Templeton's location in Roehampton, south west London, may have been convenient but its use, and the negotiations required for arrangements, supports evidence presented in Chapter Five that relations between the NSA and Froebel organisations were amicable.

## **2.2 FEI lecturers**

FEI lecturers were overwhelmingly female and evidence showed that from 1900 to 1939 the level of qualifications increased with many staff having a first degree; some had higher degrees while others held specialist qualifications in place of a degree or had taken additional qualifications such as the Montessori Diploma. Some travelled abroad to extend their knowledge, for example Lawrence to Julia Salis Schwabe's Froebel centre in Naples and Findlay to the United States. An NFU Certificate or Diploma was not a requirement for appointment to FEI. In 1939 only eight out of twenty four staff held a Froebel qualification, one held a Montessori Diploma and one a Nursery School Diploma. Many FEI lecturers established reputations beyond the college, as writers of key text-books and as lecturers. The following snapshot of FEI staff across the period draws principally on the *College Register*

(Froebel Educational Institute, 1951) and reminiscences (Read 1992). These showed that college staff played a significant role in shaping students' views and expectations which they would carry forward into their teaching careers.

### **2.2.1 Staff profiles: a snapshot**

Early in the period Maria Findlay, B.A. (London), was a key figure; appointed to teach Method of Education in 1898, she remained at FEI until her early death through nervous exhaustion at the age of fifty seven in 1912 (Findlay 1914). Findlay, like her brother John Joseph Findlay, was keenly interested in Froebelian pedagogy and in new ideas emerging from child study. Her knowledge of these derived from study with key figures in the developing discipline of child psychology, including Stanley Hall, Charles McMurry but, most significantly, with John Dewey in Chicago (Various Writers 1914). On her return to the U.K. Findlay was appointed to FEI and Southlands Training College. She became a member of the Froebel Society Council and the NFU Governing Body in 1901; her interest in revisionist pedagogy made her latter role particularly important at this point of NFU curriculum development (Smart 2006). Nance recalled Findlay as a 'wonderful lecturer...it was she who made us realize that the child's aim was not necessarily the same as the teacher's' (Nance 1988). Nance described how an apparently successful, albeit stereotyped, lesson, prepared with illustrations and specimens by 'a rather formal sophisticated student' was regarded by Findlay as 'a complete failure, and dangerous from its apparent success' (n.d., p.133). The student failed to take into account the need for the child to make any contribution. Findlay introduced students to 'startlingly new ideas', for example that children should not be shielded from the cruelty and violence in traditional stories; Findlay subscribed to recapitulation theory, the view that children's development corresponded to that of the race (Gould 1977). Consequently, play involving shooting and killing each other was natural. She shocked students by arguing for acceptance of nudity within families: 'she would tell of a family where parents and children bathed together without a vestige of clothing. This shocked some of the students at first, but others were reaching the stage of feeling that it was not rude to be nude' (ibid). Findlay was not associated with the nineteenth century Froebel movement; instead she 'represented the new generation of Froebelian leaders who were based in the training colleges' (Brehony 1987, p.427), albeit



that this research has broadened the arena of activity of those leaders to include roles as HMIs, for example; however, Findlay is an early example of how revisionist pedagogy was conveyed to Froebel students in their training.

Other early lecturers included Miss Clark, 'dressed in black and carrying a reticule' (Nance 1966, cited in Read 1992), who lectured on psychology and history of education. Nance regarded psychology as 'relevant to the things I had thought about but of which no else spoke. Freud had not yet appeared on the scene' (ibid). Literature by Sully and James Stout were their 'authorities', while history of education was 'chiefly Froebel and Pestalozzi' (ibid). Murray's criticism of the excesses of exercises with the Froebel Occupations (1903) was borne out by Nance's description of the exacting requirements of Miss de Grave which were impossible for any but the most talented to meet: 'we folded and cut squares of paper into literally hundreds of pieces and arranged them in symmetrical patterns – every piece of paper must be cut exactly and arranged into a four-sided pattern on large sheets of cardboard – Pattern – Opposite and Combination' (Nance 1988; Nance n.d.). Nance also recalled brushwork lesson under Elizabeth [Lolly] Yeats, sister of W.B. Yeats, who departed from 'the regulation brush-work – making patterns and depicting flowers with blobs' (Nance 1988) and encouraged freer, more imaginative work, both to illustrate stories and to make designs (Nance n.d.).

In 1924 FEI had just one male lecturer, John Hamilton BA (London); he taught maths at FEI from 1894-1932. Hamilton's entry in the *College Register* describes him as a '[p]ioneer in new methods of teaching mathematics in schools' and the author of maths textbooks (FEI, 1951, p.191). Kit Sauvary (1925-28) recalled Hamilton's enthusiasm which 'made Mathematics really exciting and living' (Sauvary, in Read 1992). Like Hamilton, Rosalie Lulham (Science and Nature Study) had a long career at FEI, from 1900 to 1935; during her final three years at FEI she was also Vice-Principal. Lulham studied at Holloway College and University College London from 1891-1896, gaining a BSc in Botany and Zoology. Before joining FEI she carried out research at University College and taught at Westfield College and School of Medicine. Her meticulous approach underpinned her text-book, first published in 1913; the second edition was reprinted several times (Lulham 1927). Sauvary described

Lulham as 'the outstanding lecturer' (ibid, original emphasis). Ruth Carling (1926-29), regretted not availing herself of 'the brilliance on the part of the teaching staff...I have particularly regretted Miss Lulham who could have taught me so much if I'd let her' (Carling, in Read 1992). Kathleen Crofton (1927-29) described her as 'outstanding...ten days field work on marine biology was great. Miss Lulham scrabbled in & out of rock pools with us all – she was a most encouraging & positive tutor with a keen scholarly mind' (ibid). Socialising on field trips mirrored the bonding which took place at Froebel Society summer schools, discussed in Chapter Two; Crofton lived in hostel and noted the camaraderie among the residential students in her cohort which was difficult to break into, making these field trips so important. Reminiscences showed that Lulham offered students a role model of Froebelian practice and dedication.

In 1924 the college had only three staff without degrees. Caroline Sharp (Theory and Method of Education) was one of a few lecturers who held the Montessori Diploma in addition to the Cambridge Teachers Certificate and the NFU Diploma for Training Students. Sharp taught in girls' schools before joining FEI in 1918; she continued lecturing at Southlands after leaving FEI in 1925. Kate Brown (née McCracken) was a former student (1905-06) and one of a few married lecturers. She returned to FEI in 1923 as lecturer in Education and Method following teaching in FEI's Practising School, Challoner Street, from 1906 to 1911 and in private schools. Crofton described their nervousness when Brown 'happened to look in on one's own experimental techniques. But everything & anything could be laid on the table for discussion' (Crofton, in Read 1992). In the 1930s Brown was active in the Froebel Society as a Council member (Froebel Society, 1933) and joint organiser of the Froebel Society Summer School in 1937 with Brown Smith. By this time Brown was also Head Mistress of Grove House School which opened in 1929 to provide an on-site preparatory school; FEI's Demonstration School, Colet Gardens, remained in West Kensington after the college move to Roehampton, expanding into the original college premises.

Hilda Thompson was the final staff member without a degree in 1924, apart from Esther Lawrence. Thompson had been educated at Clapham High School and held the NFU Higher Certificate; she taught Painting, Drawing, and Method of Education from 1921-45. Before appointment to FEI she taught in schools and two training colleges, including Bedford Kindergarten Training College. Like Sharp, Thompson gained the Montessori Diploma; in her case this was during her teaching at FEI, in 1929. Another staff member who held the Montessori Diploma and the NFU Higher Certificate was Miss A Smith (Practice of Education), appointed in the late 1920s. This showed how Froebel trained lecturers were engaging in new ideas; although no evidence has been found, it is possible that they introduced elements of Montessori pedagogy to students.

By 1933 evidence from FEI archives suggested that women were increasingly gaining access to and achieving in higher education and their university degree was more important than a specialist professional qualification. Three lecturers, all female, held higher degrees but no Froebel qualification. Mrs Olive Meredith (Principles of Education) had a wide education, at Cambridge Training College (Teaching Diploma), the London School of Economics and then at Newnham College, Cambridge where she gained an MA. Prior to teaching at FEI she taught in a girls' high school, at Liverpool University, Homerton (Cambridge) and the London Day Training College. Miss Florence Bowman studied modern history at Oxford (Somerville), and then philosophy at Manchester, finally gaining an M. Ed from Manchester in 1918. She lectured in Education at Homerton before taking up a lectureship in History at FEI in 1927, remaining until 1944. Bowman wrote reviews for the *Manchester Guardian* as well as books on historical topics. Miss Catherine Sherriff (Mathematics), held an MA in Maths from St Andrews. She lectured in maths at St Andrews and Kings College as well as in schools before coming to FEI in 1932. Although this evidence suggests a decline in the importance of Froebel training, it shows concern to appoint the best qualified staff for a particular subject.

Following the introduction of FEI's nursery school course in 1932 a specialist lecturer for Nursery Schools was appointed. Miss Gwendolen Watkins attended Gipsy Hill Training College to take specialist training for nursery school teaching under Lillian de Lissa. Watkins, also taught Practice of

Education; she did not have a degree but held the Montessori Diploma, reflecting de Lissa's interest in Montessori pedagogy implemented at Gipsy Hill. Together with teaching experience in nursery schools, including the Jellicoe in St Pancras, Watkins' qualifications suggested her lecturing would introduce students to the eclectic approach recommended by the Consultative Committee in 1933.

### **2.3 Reputation: requests for lecturers**

The LCC's regard for the professional status of FEI lecturers may be gauged by correspondence between Jebb and LCC officials seeking lecturers for its courses. Analysis of these documents illuminates how public bodies negotiated with private institutions; in this case it shows how language was used by a male official to attempt to structure relationships with females in a position of power (Kenway 1995; McCulloch 2004). In 1936, F. Butler, District Inspector of Schools, tried to engage either Dorothy Venour or Freda Haworth to teach a course on nature study in infant and junior schools (FEI, 11<sup>th</sup> June 1936). His request was framed in terms intended to appeal to FEI's interests: he hoped it would bring 'some of our teachers, in these types of schools, in touch with the Froebel Institute, and in doing so, perhaps provide potential candidates for the Natural History Diploma' (ibid). He also set out to flatter; a difficulty of teaching nature study in London schools was finding staff as admirably qualified as Venour and Haworth, with the necessary 'authority of competent knowledge, sound teaching experience and practice in correct technique' (ibid). Correspondence between Jebb and L. Brooks, Divisional Inspector of Schools, in 1937, discussed the appointment of Catherine Sherriff to teach a course of lectures on either maths in the Junior School or number in the Infants School. Requests were made again for Venour and Haworth. None of the requests were met; the reason was consistent, that college duties placed a burden on lecturers which left no free time for extra-mural teaching. These requests demonstrated regard for Froebel lecturers and not solely in those subjects pre-eminently Froebelian. In 1937, Jebb was contacted by Sanson, LCC Inspector for Infants Method, regarding recommendations for schools to be circulated to visitors, valuable either for their general approach or because of teaching of subjects, such as nature study, handwork or project work. This gave Jebb the opportunity to recommend schools demonstrating a Froebelian ethos; Munster Road Infant School, used by the college for teaching practice, was listed in manuscript notes in Jebb's

handwriting (op.cit., 4<sup>th</sup> November 1937). At this school the head teacher, Miss Grocott, was attempting, with Jebb's support, to improve amenities by requesting an outdoor sandpit and the conversion of a strip of land into a garden, both features of a Froebelian environment (op.cit., 7 July 1936). Sanson's role on the Froebel Council has been previously discussed; this communication showed how Froebelians could work together to effectively publicise practice.

### **3. The FEI curriculum**

Few documents detailing FEI's curriculum from 1900 to 1939 have been located; in accordance with Bryant's rejection of the view that such gaps undermine historical interpretation and theory-building, this section addresses this lacuna by synthesising surviving miscellaneous records (Bryant 2000). In 1952 Jebb described the gradual change which had taken place:

From a specialized course based on a specific study of Froebel's teaching and methods to a very much wider and more balanced programme in which there is more scope for a student to develop her own individual talents, and in which Froebel's educational discoveries have been re-interpreted in terms of modern psychology and educational practice (Jebb 1952, p.6)

The section draws largely on the inspection report of 1901, reminiscences of student activities in FEI's archives and FEI's internal examination papers. They show that FEI's curriculum both incorporated new disciplinary developments and retained its focus on core Froebelian subjects.

#### **3.1 The Board of Education inspection report, 1902**

At the beginning of the period the syllabus required detailed knowledge of the Gifts and Occupations but also included physiology and hygiene (FEI, 1901). The Board's inspection report (Board of Education, 1902) noted focus on Froebel's life and work and on instruction in the Gifts and Occupations, but linked to modern theory; Froebel's ideas were 'ably expounded, and translated into

modern psychological language. Constant references were made to the modern works of Professors James, Stout, Sully and others' (ibid, p.17). The syllabus of theoretical work was judged 'excellent' (ibid, p.10) and taught to support practical application: 'Psychology, Logic and Ethics are taught so as to bring out their educational importance and aspects, and to bring students to see what assistance they can get from these sciences for their own school-work' (ibid). These comments demonstrate that FEI had quickly developed a Froebelian curriculum which drew on new insights.

### **3.2 Reminiscences of training**

Early students' reminiscences also showed that lecturers covered new disciplines alongside core Froebelian subjects. They referred to Swedish drill, history of education, psychology, brushwork, blackboard drawing; archive photographs showed nature study – drawing of specimens and gardening; Nance described it as covering a wide ground (Nance n.d.). FEI lecturers placed emphasis on teaching children; they were not to be left simply to play. Kate Walton Smith (1912-15) wrote that Annie Malin, mistress of method and head teacher of Challoner Street, FEI's practising school, 'made us very aware of the importance of TEACHING the 3 R's' (Smith 1978, p.15). All the same, Froebelian activities such as handwork and dance were central; Hilda Feather (1916-19) referred to post-war difficulties of obtaining craft materials for her handwork exhibit in 1919 and the 'utter joy and release of the "Joyfling" dance', in eurythmics lessons (Feather, in Read, 1992). Katherine Sauvary (1925-28) recalled Olive Garnett's enthusiastic teaching of geography and the first child care course, taught by Kate Brown, which involved 'a real study of the child from birth' (Sauvary, in Read, op.cit.). Angela Webster (1925-28) most enjoyed Lulham's zoology lessons with their practical character: 'watching dragon-flies emerge, newts laying their eggs on the pond weed in the aquarium, watching the nuthatch and tree creepers outside – and the badgers of course' (Webster, in Read, op.cit.). Margaret Dick (1927-30) recalled travelling on the 73 bus from West Kensington with 'jam jars full of tadpoles, branches of trees, flowers, fishing nets and live rabbits – these were all used on our teaching practice' (Dick 1986, p.44). Dick particularly enjoyed handwork; she recorded that eleven different types were

required for the final examination but this was across a range which now included book-binding and toy-making, not the symmetrical work which Murray (1903) had criticised.

### **3.3 FEI examination papers, 1937**

NFU examination papers tested FEI students on the range of theoretical and practical curriculum subjects up to 1921. Thereafter, FEI was permitted by the NFU to set its own papers but only those for 1937 have been located; these are analysed here. The 'History of Educational Ideas' paper included questions on Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Owen and two on Froebel (FEI, 1937). One question asked students to write on an educationist from the previous one hundred years, giving students the opportunity to write on Dewey, Montessori, McMillan, Isaacs and Steiner, for example. Another question required discussion of important developments in education and care since the beginning of the twentieth century, providing a focus for answers on welfare and, possibly, on nursery schools. The NFU history of education paper included two questions on Dewey in 1937. Neither FEI nor NFU paper included a specific question on Montessori. The FEI 'Principles of Education' paper included two questions on the play/work distinction, possibly alluding to the Froebel/Montessori debate, although, again, Montessori was not named. No papers set by FEI or the NFU specifically referred to psychoanalytic perspectives; however, the question in the FEI history paper on developments in education and care arguably gave students the opportunity to write on the work of Isaacs, Anna Freud, Melanie Klein *et al.*

Although evidence from other records showed that FEI was training its students in revisionist pedagogy, this was not fully reflected in the exam papers of 1937; in this instance the lacuna in the records was too great to permit a sound interpretation.

### **3.4 Core Froebelian subjects: a training in theory and practice**

The FEI curriculum continued to include theoretical and practical training in core Froebelian subjects throughout the period; this section focuses on handwork and nature study.

### **3.4.1 Handwork**

Handwork was one of the core Froebelian subjects. For this subject, and for nature study in the following section, samples of student work showed that they learnt through theory and practice. Early examples of handwork, for example by Doris Densham, included Froebel's Occupations, with detailed notes and samples of paper folding. In later work, the occupations were supplanted by handwork, for example, weaving and toy-making. Margaret Yule (FEI, 1930-33) described centres of interest and projects which incorporated handwork. Hilda Chapman (FEI, 1916-19) produced a shop for her final year exhibit in 1919. More elaborate projects included a children's house built in the Roehampton grounds by Sylvia Major (FEI, 1929-1932) and her friends, documented by photographs. This showed how developments in Froebelian pedagogy, drawing on Dewey, had entered the Froebel training curriculum. Handwork skills came into play in charitable work supporting the Michaelis Free Kindergarten and Somers Town Nursery School. Children were changed on arrival and wore smocks made by FEI students; each Christmas, students donated toys and clothes made by them so that each child received a present.

### **3.4.2 Nature Study**

Nature study was the second core subject in the Froebelian curriculum; extensive archives showed student activities: Minute Books of the St Francis Guild, founded by Rosalie Lulham; photographs of the annual Spring Fair, commemorative journals of field trips, and illustrated lecture notes. FEI staff contributed to popularising nature study, showing its relevance in urban schools as well as rural areas; Froebelian approaches to nature study were disseminated widely in the process. Freda Haworth trained at Froebel from 1919-21 and succeeded Lulham as Head of Department in 1935. She published topic books for children, including *Aquaria* (1954); like Lulham, she, and other staff, contributed to pamphlets published by the *School Nature Study Union*. As with handwork, nature study was taught through theory and practice. Gardening was a key activity; at FEI's first site in Talgarth



Road, West Kensington, it was confined to a narrow strip of land between college and railway line. Field trips, in particular to Keston, Kent, gave early students opportunities for detailed observation of specific habitats. During World War One gardening skills were put to practical use when Froebel students worked as Land Girls. Photographs from personal albums showed these middle class girls engaged in digging and other pursuits, sometimes with Lawrence observing their efforts. After the move to Roehampton, the thirty acre estate provided dramatically increased opportunities, including for stock-rearing. Badgers were found and their movements recorded and pigs kept in the area occupied in recent years by the Redford House Nursery. The grounds provided a rich resource for student work with children, including opportunities for pond-dipping and studying trees, observations which could then be explored at greater depth in follow up work in the classroom. One student who used these opportunities to develop a career path was Jacqueline Palmer (FEI, 1935 to 1938), who subsequently ran children's clubs at the Natural History Museum.

### **3.5 New courses for new developments**

FEI responded to contemporary discussion concerning staff in infant and nursery schools in two ways, by participating in new schemes devised by the NFU and by developing its own courses.

#### **3.5.1 Child Attendant scheme**

This scheme was introduced by the NFU in 1910 in response to recommendations by the 1908 Consultative Committee, proposing helpers to work alongside teachers. The initiative was short-lived, with only three meetings recorded in the Minute Book for the Child Attendant Association. Lawrence explained the stalemate in correspondence with former student Edith Hodsman, who hoped to have her own kindergarten inspected for inclusion in the scheme:

The Child Attendant Scheme is more or less at a standstill because neither the County Council nor any other Body has undertaken to employ Child Attendants if they are trained - and if there is no demand for attendants girls will probably not consent to be trained (FEI, Nov 30 1910)

Lawrence enclosed a booklet setting out the aims of the scheme; it specified two training centres: FEI, including Michaelis Free Kindergarten, and the Adelaide Wragge Mission Kindergarten in Hoxton. The duties of attendants were similar to those of children's nurses: inspection of children on arrival at school for cleanliness and general well-being; washing where necessary; physical care during school hours; and physical and moral training. Although this was not academic training it showed that FEI actively responded to new developments regarding staffing in schools, albeit that the Consultative Committee's recommendation was not taken up by LEAs. A similar, non-academic, scheme was the Mother Craft course; prospectuses for this were sent to London headmistresses in 1926 (Froebel Educational Institute, Minutes, July 1926-March 1927). No minimum standard of general education was set and the course ran from December 1926 with just four Dutch recruits. Lawrence recommended the course was dropped as she did not have time to establish it and it needed 'nursing'; instead she proposed it was added to the three year course as an option.

### **3.5.2 Nursery and infant school course**

By 1931 there were forty-four nursery schools, with plans for fourteen more (NSA, 1931). In that year Lawrence proposed that FEI should offer a nursery school course; two were already offered, at Rachel McMillan Centre (examined by the NFU) and at Gipsy Hill (University of London). Approval by the NFU was announced at Jebb's first committee meeting in March 1932. It was described as especially designed for students who intended to work in nursery schools and classes, infant schools and kindergartens (FEI, October 1932). The course aimed to enable students to undertake study of pre-school age children and led to the Teacher's Certificate of the NFU. Also approved by the Board of Education, it was an alternative to FEI's established three year course which covered infant, kindergarten and junior school teaching. As the first year's subjects for both courses were identical, it enabled students to defer their decision on their teaching specialism (ibid). The practical component provided students with experience in nursery schools and classes, infant schools and kindergartens during the second and third years. Significantly, although hygiene was included, the primary focus of

the curriculum was on child psychology and aspects of teaching; contemporary discourse on nursery schools continued to place emphasis on physical care and training in good habits. The pamphlet concluded:

The course is many-sided, and should appeal to students of very varying gifts, and [who] have a variety of interests. A good knowledge of music is a valuable asset, and it is essential that students should have at least sufficient musical ability to enable them to play and sing simple nursery songs. The most important requirement is a real love of children, and a desire to serve them (ibid)

Jebb lectured on nursery school teaching to the Birmingham Branch of the NSA in 1933 and may well have used the opportunity to promote the new course (NSA, 1933). The course had limited success; the IFEI Annual Report for 1933-34 (FEI 1934) listed eleven students but no further reference was made to in subsequent reports.

#### **4. Inspection Reports on FEI: Board of Education, 1902 and NFU, 1929**

##### **4.1 Board of Education, 1902**

The inspection report's comments on FEI's curriculum were noted above in section 3.1. Inspection of students' practical work comprised their observation of experienced teachers, supervised teaching and criticism lessons in Colet Gardens Demonstration School and Challoner Street Practising School. Criticism lessons were lessons taken by students and followed the next day by critical peer and tutor review. The inspectors were very positive; student work was well-organized and showed 'very sound teaching', with evidence not only of careful preparation and 'intelligent interpretation of what was taught'. Students' notes were 'original and striking. The whole theoretical work is fresh and vigorous' (Board of Education, 1902, p.18). Less satisfactory were arrangements for supervised teaching practice, with limitations on available schools, especially for those teaching older children. It anticipated that external schools would be required for teaching practice for older children. Recommendations

were made to improve the criticism lessons, which caused students much anxiety; it recommended they should follow on from the lesson rather than a day later, with less input from teachers and encouragement of more free discussion.

#### **4.2 National Froebel Union, 1929 and 1933**

Thomas Raymont made a formal inspection for the NFU in 1928, followed by informal visits; these fed into his report of May 1929 (NFU, 1927-35). In the late 1920s, the NFU Examinations Committee complained of mark discrepancies between NFU and college grades, which showed that FEI awarded lower grades than NFU examiners (FEI, Minutes 1926-1942, December 1927, October 1928). Lawrence explained that college lecturers took all of a student's work into account, not just one paper and made no suggestion of a change to practice. Raymont's inspection was intended to secure the inclusion of FEI on the NFU's syllabus as an 'efficient' college. Although his report 'had on the whole been satisfactory' (FEI, Minutes *ibid*, May 28<sup>th</sup> 1929), difficulties in relations seemed to be present. A marginal note referred to a 'skirmish with the NFF' relating to the setting of exam papers; Lawrence reported 'friction' over the setting of compulsory questions on methods of teaching in first year papers (*ibid*). Unfortunately, FEI exam papers for this period were not located which may have thrown light on the issues. These comments in the private records showed the difficulties for a college which, while nominally independent, was obliged to conform to the requirements of an external examining body.

In his report Raymont commented on large classes with no interaction in which individual students were 'lost sight of' (NFU, 1929). Despite this, instruction was 'generally very high quality' (*ibid*). Raymont regretted the loss of an on-site school since the move to Roehampton; he hoped for a new school there 'in which all that is best in Froebelian, or perhaps I should say *neo-Froebelian* educational philosophy, may be exemplified in practice and in life' (*ibid*, added emphasis). The implications of this phrase, also used by Ballard in 1932, are explored in Chapter Eight's discussion of revisionist Froebelian pedagogy. The lack of an on-site school had been addressed by 1933; in his later report in 1933 he noted the 'very important changes' which had taken place, principally the opening of Grove House School, in the Roehampton grounds 'in the capable hands' of former student Kate Brown

(NFU,1933). Raymont commented on the need for effective 'correlation' of the theoretical training and practical work; he cited examiners' reports on individual subjects which showed room for improvement. In stressing the importance of ensuring students were 'interested in adapting the methods of the kindergarten to the problems of the elementary school' (ibid), and should perhaps be inspired to work in them, Raymont implicitly acknowledged the bias of FEI students to work in private schools, a concern expressed also by the Board of Education in correspondence with FEI (Board of Education, 1932).

## **5. FEI students: a snapshot of career paths**

Infant teaching in the nineteenth century was the province of working class women teachers, although this was changing by the turn of the century (Widdowson 1980). Jebb's summary of FEI's sixty-year history (1952) stated that students had gone to teach in elementary schools and Free Kindergartens; she also claimed that 'Froebel-trained teachers have made a most important contribution to better teaching in Junior schools' (Jebb op. cit., p.9). Records of entrants in FEI Registers showed that FEI students typically had been educated in private girls' schools or the larger high schools, some belonging to the Girls Public Day School Trust. They thus represented an élite, overwhelmingly drawn from wealthy middle class families. Their career paths can be traced through FEI Annual Reports, 'News of old students' in *The Link*, and unpublished personal reminiscences. The *College Register* (FEI, 1951) provides useful biographical summaries. News reports in *The Link* provided evidence of career paths taken and how marriage and motherhood impacted on careers. FEI archives were supplemented by documents in the London Metropolitan Archive which listed posts obtained by students from 1924 to 1937, although with omissions. The following analysis of leavers in FEI's first decade to 1910, 1924, 1931 and 1937 show that Jebb's claim was of limited relevance for the period to 1939; students overwhelmingly continued to enter the private sector.

## **5.1 FEI leavers in 1890s to 1910**

Early FEI annual reports showed that in the years just prior to 1900 the vast majority of students were employed as teaching staff in high schools and small private schools. Some started their own kindergartens or worked in families. Others followed more diverse paths; in 1898, Constance Dent took a post in a kindergarten in Sydenham. She subsequently became Kindergarten Mistress at Colet Gardens before becoming mistress in charge at Somers Town Nursery School when it opened in St Pancras in 1910. Dent left after just six months, possibly because of exhaustion; according to her successor, A.K. [Kathleen] Stokes, Dent 'gave herself heart and soul to the work' (1933, p.33). Ellen Reade left FEI in 1910; in 1912 she reported on work in a Parisian kindergarten, 'the first to be founded in France' (1912, p.17), where the children came from the Rue de Chavonne, 'one of the dingiest streets in the east end of Paris' (ibid). Reade had been educated at Sandecotes, a private girls' school in Parkstone, Dorset; arguably her experience in Paris was an illuminating and possibly challenging experience. Unfortunately, nothing is known of her subsequent career.

## **5.2 FEI leavers in 1924**

Of the fifty four students who left in 1924 the vast majority found employment in private schools or classes, seven specifically as Kindergarten Mistress; some were not specified (FEI, 1924). Significantly, Sauvary, who left in 1928, speculated that it was because of her FEI training that all of her posts had been in direct grant or the private sector (Sauvary, in Read 1992). Only three 1924 leavers became infant school teachers. Winifred Halstead worked first of all in Dewsbury, her home town. Following five years as Head Mistress of a girls' Secondary Modern School, she became Vice-Principal of Stanley Training College in Wakefield. Lucy Page spent four years in state infant schools before moving into the private sector as Assistant Kindergarten Mistress at Haberdashers' Aske's Girls School. One 1924 leaver, Elsie Hunter, went to work for the London Orphan School at Watford. Evidence suggested that infant school teaching was a brief career option before entering private schools or different areas of the state system.

### **5.3 FEI leavers in 1931**

A similar picture emerged in subsequent lists; of sixty nine leavers in 1931 two went to work in schools for orphans, both having gained first class certificates, Violet Carter in Watford and Mary Cox at the Royal Infant Orphanage, Wanstead. Two went to work as Assistant Mistresses in infants schools in Wallington and Beckenham, one leaver took a post as Infant Mistress near Leicester and one gained a post as Class II mistress in Fleet Road School, Hampstead. This school had an interesting history; Louisa Walker, Head Teacher from 1879-1903, provided an interpretation of Froebelian pedagogy tailored to meet the needs of her upwardly mobile working class families (Marsden 1991). Some students found employment in schools associated with FEI, for example Saunders Road Infants School; the majority of Notting Hill Nursery School children went to the school and were welcomed by its head teacher, Mrs Bury (Reed 1912). Other kinds of schools where students found work included the Foundling Hospital School at Redhill, Lankhills Special School, Winchester and the Children's Hospital, Cold Ash, Newbury. This showed a widening range of employment for FEI students.

### **5.4 FEI leavers in 1937**

Less detail was included in the 1937 list for the fifty leavers; for some entrants the specific school is not given, for example, Joan Anderson was employed by Oldbury Education Committee. Three students went to work in the Infant Department of Acton Education Committee; two others were entered on the LCC List of First Appointments (Infant Department). The employment of FEI students by Acton, which had adopted Montessori pedagogy in the borough's infant schools and nursery classes (Board of Education, 1930-32) was notable. It suggests that either the borough had moved away from its interest in Montessori, or that the Froebel trained students had adequate knowledge of Montessori to enable them to teach in schools with a Montessori bias. The evidence of HMI Miss E. Loveday to the 1933 Consultative Committee supported the latter view; she stated that 'the English interpretation and practice of her principles in the P.E.S. [sic] differ widely from her own, and it is very doubtful if she would recognize or like her English offspring' (Board of Education, 1930-32). Finally, three 1937 leavers went to work in nursery schools: Notting Hill Nursery School (voluntary work) and Somers

Town Nursery School, both associated with FEI and discussed in Chapter Seven, and Old Church Road Nursery School, Stepney, funded by the LCC.

Correspondence between Jebb and the Board of Education in 1932 and memoranda from 1933 (Board of Education, 1924-1962) showed that the majority of grant-aided students were continuing to enter private schools. In 1930, eighteen out of sixty two leavers entered state-aided schools; in 1931, nine out of sixty four leavers did so. Percentages given in Board documents for Maria Grey and FEI students showed a big difference between the colleges, 81.5 % entering state-aided schools from Maria Grey as against 14.1% for FEI in 1931. This differential altered for 1932 leavers to 50% to 25.5%, however, manuscript notes showed the Board's unwillingness to press colleges on the issue, despite the 'present embarrassment' given its policy to reduce the number of recognised students at a time of teacher over supply.

## **5.5 Nursery school work: a snapshot in 1933**

Fourteen alumni were listed in 'Old students teaching in nursery schools' in *The Link* in 1933. News reports from past students covered twenty two years. They supported evidence that career paths in nursery and infant school work remained the choice of a very small proportion of students. Kathleen Stokes (left 1909) had been the second Superintendent of Somers Town Nursery School from 1910-1931. Of nine reports from 1911 leavers, only one, Nancy Hill, worked in a nursery. Hill worked in Sun Babies Nursery, Hoxton 'comprising both Nursery School and Day Nursery' (ibid, p.50). From 1926, four out of twenty seven alumni reported work with poor children. Joan Buxton worked as a Care Committee member in St Pancras; Margaret Watts worked with two and a half to five-year olds in an LCC Children's Home in Leytonstone, formerly a Poor Law Institution. She reported that 'only 2% of the people here had ever heard of Froebel...As for my own particular job, I am longing to turn it into a nursery school, but it is impossible' (ibid, p71). Dorothea de Rusette (left 1930), educated at Cheltenham Ladies College and Bedford College, University of London, was employed in a nursery class attached to an infant school in Bow. Of seventy three leavers from 1931 only one, Violet Carter,



was working with poor children, as noted previously. Three were teaching in infant schools, one of them in a babies' class. The last group were the 1932 leavers. Again, a very tiny number, four out of fifty one reports, recorded work with the poor. However, reports showed the difficulties these privileged women faced. Gladys Cook described her work in a Bristol school with four to five year olds 'from the condemned slums of the poorest parts of Bristol' (ibid, p.84). She wrote '[t]hey are dears, and I like them although I must confess that at first I was rather overwhelmed by their number and backwardness' (ibid). Notable is Cook's description 'at first', suggesting she overcame her initial difficulty; resistance to employing middle-class Froebel-trained teachers had rested on their perceived inability to control large classes of unruly working class children (Munday, in Board of Education, 1905). This was a long-standing issue, identified also in the report of the Cross Commission in 1888 (Brehony 1987). For Cook, gaining experience provided the means to surmount this obstacle.

## **5.6 FEI students and free kindergarten developments in Edinburgh**

Some FEI students made a significant contribution to free kindergarten developments in Edinburgh and the networks which grew from them. Elisabeth MacGregor (1911-1912), educated at St George's High School, Edinburgh and The Mount, York, taught in a girls' high school after leaving FEI. She moved to Edinburgh and founded Hope Cottage Child Garden in 1913. MacGregor wrote about her work, recording that she had found the starting of the kindergarten and 'the setting of standards for children and parents and others connected with it...rather alarming' (1914, p.35). Comparing her different teaching experiences she concluded 'for joy in the children, and interest in seeing and understanding better the possibilities and problems of real life, shorn of all superfluities, there is no comparison between this work and my experience of High School teaching' (ibid, p.37). Ursula Herdman (1924-26), also educated at St George's High School, Edinburgh, left FEI with a 1<sup>st</sup> class certificate and then gained an MA at Edinburgh University. In 1927 she became Head Mistress of St Saviour's Child Garden in Chessels Court, Canongate, Edinburgh, and remained there until 1939. Herdman remained connected with this community for many years. Lileen Hardy's history of the school (1912) and Dorothy Gardner's account of her teaching experiences there in 1921-22 (1975) give a vivid impression of the difficulties facing Herdman and others working in these communities. Like their peers working in

nursery schools, day nurseries and orphanages in London and other centres, they were putting Lawrence's vision of service into practical reality.

## **5.7 Alumni support for nursery schools**

Although few students chose to work in nursery schools, evidence showed that many participated in voluntary initiatives, helping in schools, making overalls and toys and providing cakes for social events in the schools, which sometimes involved parents. Reports from Notting Hill Nursery School (Michaelis Free Kindergarten) and Somers Town Nursery Schools, recorded gifts given by Guild members; in 1910 these included pictures, frames, clocks, bulbs, handkerchiefs, socks and other clothes, Froebel's Gifts Five and Six and tickets for the Zoo. Reports from alumni showed that many gave up work on marriage, or, in state schools, were required to do so by the marriage bar but that some chose to continue working with deprived children on a voluntary basis.

## **5.8 Jeanie P. Slight: a Froebelian career path**

Jeanie P. Slight (1907-09) was a significant figure in the period with an active career as a Froebelian; her stance was expressed in the title of her book *Living With Our Children* (Slight 1933). After her initial training she was kindergarten mistress at the Fielden School, Demonstration School of Manchester University, from 1910 to 1913. She became friends with J.J. Findlay, having previously known his sister, Maria, at FEI. It is possible that Slight obtained this post through her recommendation. Similarly, she may have inspired Slight to go to study in America in 1914; Findlay had worked and studied with Dewey in Chicago. Slight went to Teachers College, Columbia University, and gained its Diploma in 1914; back in the U.K. she took the NFU Trainers' Diploma in 1918. Slight spent two years as Mistress of Method at Polam Hall, Darlington, from 1914-16, followed by four years lecturing in Infant Education at Homerton (1919-23), at Saffron Walden (1924-31), and then as Inspector of Schools for Leeds (1931-42). Slight was also an NFU examiner and author of articles, in *Child Life* and *New Era*, as well as her book, dedicated to the Findlays (Slight 1933). Like other FEI staff, such as Lawrence and Hilda

Frodsham, Slight was active in the NSA; when the Leeds Branch was formed in 1934 Slight became Honorary Secretary. The Branch automatically gained formal representation on the General Council and Slight served as its representative. Just one year later the Branch was the largest in the NSA, with one hundred and thirty three members; by 1938 membership had reached two hundred and thirty four. Slight also addressed meetings of branches in Hull and Sheffield. She continued as an active NSA member and education committee member beyond 1939. Slight showed how ambitious Froebelian women could carve out wide-ranging career paths; in doing so they were in a position to implement Froebelian pedagogy in a variety of educational contexts.

## **6. How FEI students reflected on their Froebel training**

Froebel students recorded their reminiscences as individuals and year groups; examples of individual accounts have been quoted above; others were published in the 1982 Froebel Bicentenary edition of *The Link* and in the 1992 FEI Centenary edition. The year group which entered FEI in 1938 produced *The Froebel Touch*, a 'united biography', in 1985. The following accounts show that for some students. FEI training was inspirational and provided a strong sense of what Bourdieu calls habitus (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), reinforced by community living and shared experiences.

### **6.1 Mary Cubitt, 1921-23**

Mary Cubitt trained at FEI just as it moved from Talgarth Road, West Kensington, to Roehampton. The move was fortunate; Cubitt, who went to school in Norfolk and Berkhamsted, noted that Talgarth Road's 'ugly surroundings' and 'hordes of young women' nearly led to her giving up the course (1982, p.17). After teaching for thirteen years in girls' grammar schools, Cubitt took Isaacs' Child Development Course at the Institute of Education in 1936-7; she then became Head Teacher of an Infant and Junior school in Wiltshire. She joined the Members' Committee of the National Froebel Foundation in 1944 and returned to FEI, then evacuated to Offley Place, in 1945 as Lecturer and later

Principal under its independent existence. Cubitt recalled how her training gave her 'time to listen and look, to think and talk and to read and read' (ibid, p.16); although she did not remember reading much of Froebel's own work for her, '[t]o be a Froebelian seems...to be a way of living' (ibid, p.16). She ascribed her desire to bring about changes in conventional formal teaching to the knowledge she had gained of Froebel's ideals of harmony, self-activity and self-expression.

## **6.2 Kathleen Crofton, 1927-29**

Crofton left FEI in 1927 with a First Class Certificate and the Handwork Diploma. She worked for eleven years in two prestigious girls' schools in Bristol, Badminton and Colston before lecturing at the Froebelian Bedford Training College and then Birmingham University. Crofton recorded that:

The college gave me enduring principles of sound teaching. Education came to mean much more than transferring knowledge and has introduced books and dissertations on education, psychology and methods which for me formed a permanent base on which to build (Crofton, in Read 1992).

Crofton used her specialism in handwork in her subsequent career as Lecturer in Education in the Craft Department at Birmingham.

## **6.3 Sheila Macleod, 1928-31**

Sheila Macleod's initial experiences were the reverse of Cubitt's; as a Londoner, educated in Wembley, she found Roehampton's 'wide open spaces...an adventure into a new and wider world' (1982, p.14). Macleod described how the 'sound philosophy which became and remained a part of myself' (ibid, p.15) helped her overcome early difficulties as a teacher; it led her to promote Froebelian pedagogy within FEI, as lecturer in Education under Jebb and, from 1955, Molly Brearley. Macleod also served as Vice-President of the Michaelis Guild and was Head Teacher of Ibstock Place School, FEI's relocated Demonstration School, from 1958 to 1974. Macleod's account illuminated the profound

role played by lecturers in shaping students as Froebelians, not so much from what they said but 'from what these women were in themselves' (ibid, p.15)

#### **6.4 The Froebel Touch: how 1938 entrants reflected on their training**

Forty seven years after they entered FEI a group of students from 1938 looked back on their training in 1985. Frankie Hancock's reflections echoed those of Macleod; she recalled 'the sound philosophy and fundamental approach to life that training in Froebel principles has given us' (Hancock 1985, p.1). Daphne Dyke identified the significance of Froebel training as 'variety, stimulation, some knowledge, but practical experience first and foremost; guidance and advice when sought, but freedom to make mistakes and learn from them...the need to bring children up to respect, love, understand, and learn to live with nature and the natural laws seems even more important than ever' (ibid, p.34); Betty Craw described the 'liberality of outlook, tolerance of many points of view, a philosophy in which beauty in all its forms and the search for truth were the important things' (ibid, p.30); Margaret Barrow stressed the 'growing awareness of the importance of harmony with one's environment and the people in it (ibid, p.9). These, and many other, accounts demonstrated how Froebelian principles had a profound effect on the views of these women on teaching, on their roles as mothers and on life in general.

Discussing the 'murmurs' that Froebel had been abandoned by F.E.I., former student Rose Wilson, writing in 1932 from her position as Lecturer in Education, suggested that while studying the *Education of Man* was still valuable in itself, an understanding of the underlying enduring principles was of more importance; their validity lay in that they 'have become the working hypotheses for a wide variety of social and educational activity' (Wilson 1932, p.26), beyond their philosophical explanations. She concluded that Froebel's work 'lives ever creatively "in uninterrupted continuity" and has become part of our lives' (ibid, p.27), a view demonstrated in the reminiscences discussed here.

## **7. Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that the pre-eminent Froebel training institution in the U.K. reflected the revisionist thrust of the Froebel movement's propaganda and certificating arms from 1900-1939. Evidence showed that formal training with the Gifts and Occupations still featured in the curriculum in 1901, but that new ideas were being introduced by lecturers such as Maria Findlay. The 1902 Board of Education Inspection reported that new interpretations of Froebel's ideas emanating from psychologists in the child study movement were already being integrated with Froebelian pedagogy. Although Lawrence criticised Montessori pedagogy, she introduced students to her ideas and appointed lecturers with Montessori qualifications; however, surviving examination papers failed to mention Montessori but reflected the new disciplines taught by Findlay and others. Reports showed that lecturers presented theory in a way that students could utilise in practical work; that this was not always successful was identified in Raymont's 1933 report. The emphasis on handwork and nature study continued; handwork had become freer by the second decade, with project work required for the final examinations. Nature study under Lulham was evidently much enjoyed by students, and all students quoted here found FEI staff to be inspiring role models who challenged conventional ideas with what were, to them, radical new ways of thinking. This led some to work with poor children in often difficult and demanding circumstances. Inevitably, reminiscences reflect positive views; the views of those students who experienced FEI more negatively have not been located.

Ultimately, the ethos of the curriculum at FEI remained grounded in Froebelian pedagogy but reflected the revisionist Froebelian pedagogy which had developed. The wider programme of training which FEI developed incorporated new disciplines and pedagogy in a broader range of courses, not all academic in nature. The three-year academic teacher-training, pressed on the FEI by Lawrence, reportedly brought her into conflict with some Froebelian colleagues, including 'a well-known Froebellian [sic] Principal, bitterly censuring the idea...referring to the Froebel Education Institute as "a wealthy college,

able to embark on such a scheme at the expense of smaller colleges” (Anon 1945, p.15). Evidence for this has not been located; Lawrence pursued the scheme nevertheless and, in so doing, contributed to the developing status of work with young children.

Reminiscences showed that FEI students shared a sense of common identity with peers; being Froebelian, in this case from the premier Froebel training institution, carried a powerful cultural capital. This was fostered by residence at Roehampton; hostel residents felt less part of the camaraderie but enjoyed compensatory experiences, in which staff participated. Those students who wrote of their training saw themselves as special and unique, ‘like belonging to an exclusive club’ (Beryl Hill, in Hancock 1985, p.51), or as Margaret Barrow put it ‘I was privileged to be trained in a very special environment. Looking back now, I realise that F.E.I was even more than special, it was a very exceptional environment’ (Barrow, in Hancock, 1985, p.12). Some students found this exclusivity challenging; Jessie Hewitt recalled ‘There was much to intimidate: - posh accents and the apparent poise and sophistication of others’ (Hewitt, in Hancock, 1985, p.49). This even extended to the buildings at Roehampton: ‘the elegance of Templeton or Grove House’ (ibid). This suggested FEI was attracting a wider range of students than the middle class group which had characterised early FEI students, facilitated by grants available from the Board of Education. Nevertheless, FEI’s élite status continued to 1939 and this was reflected in the fact that the majority of students entered private schools, shown in the lists of destinations for leavers up to 1939. This had implications for the dissemination of Froebelian pedagogy in infant schools. Chapter Seven describes how those who did choose to work in infant and nursery schools put their training into practice.

## Chapter Seven

### Froebelian Pedagogy in Infant and Nursery Schools

#### 1. Introduction

Evidence presented in Chapter Six showed that training at FEI from 1900 to 1939 reflected revisionist Froebelian pedagogy; the Gifts and Occupations were dispensed with in favour of handwork and students introduced to new concepts emanating from child study theory. FEI students, and others trained elsewhere, began, in small numbers, to take up posts in infant schools and the new nursery schools. As shown in Chapter Six, this change was in line with the view expressed by the NFU in the 1930s (NFU, 1933), that Froebelians *should* enter this arena, and criticism by the Board of Education that they were not doing so (Board of Education, 1932). This chapter discusses how Froebelians implemented their training in LCC infant schools in spite of challenges from unsuitable classrooms, many still with galleries, and from large class sizes, which continued to the end of the period (Simon 1974). It also shows how Froebelians developed practice in two voluntary nursery schools, both of which began to receive additional funding from the LCC during the period. Chapter Three presented evidence that freer methods were encouraged by HMIs and local inspectors associated with the Froebel movement, and, in Chapter Four, by Consultative Committee recommendations in 1908, 1931 and 1933, which reflected Froebelian witness evidence.

Numerous scholars have suggested that education of young children in Britain has developed from an amalgam of different child-centred approaches (Weber 1971; Selleck 1972; Whitbread 1972; Webb 1974; Smith 1976; Darling 1994); some argue for supremacy of a particular pedagogy. Rita Kramer claims that '[s]oon everyone who taught infant or elementary school in London either taught or talked Montessori' (Kramer 1976, p.155). Conversely, Lance Jones argued in 1924 'there are now few



schools for younger children in which there has not been effected some change in the spirit as well as in the method of instruction, due directly or indirectly to the influence of kindergarten ideas' (Jones 1924, p.149). Further, Jones suggested that '[t]he spirit of the Kindergarten, moreover, has penetrated slowly but surely upwards into the lower grades of Elementary and of Secondary Schools' (ibid). A series of articles on nursery schools in the *Times Educational Supplement* in 1917 ascribed change in opinion to Montessori's influence, in highlighting that what was wrong was the kind of schooling provided, rather than education *per se* (Anon 1917a). While acknowledging Montessori's contribution, the writer, whose credentials have not been identified, criticised her emphasis on individualised education; instead the writer stressed the value of collective work and argued that Froebel deserved greatest credit:

If we had to name one man to whom belonged the inalienable credit of infusing the teaching of younger children with the right spirit we could not fail to name Friedrich Froebel. From him and his disciples have come nearly all the reforms which have revolutionized the infant school and turned it into a real child garden. The soul of the movement is Froebel's, and to him belong most of the practices in which that soul is embodied (Anon 4 October 1917, p.380)

In a speech to the NSA in 1925, Philip Ballard noted changes which had taken place over time in infant teaching. Arguably in acknowledgment of his audience, Ballard attributed this largely to advocates of nursery schools; he also cited Froebelian efforts, 'working to free children', and Montessori practice, which had shown that 'private study could be carried out even by the little child' (Nursery School Association, 1921 - 1925). In 1930, Lynch described how schools were responding to the 'new education' through schemes of organisation and new teaching methods: 'the influence of Froebel, Montessori and John Dewey is universal. There is not one school in this country that is not in some way affected by their ideas' (1930, p.22); their principles were 'applied, often unconsciously, in whole or in part, in hundreds of schools' (ibid). Brehony (2000) claims that, ultimately, Froebelian pedagogy became paramount: 'the revisionist reading of Froebel (Montessori notwithstanding), came to dominate the field of early childhood education for the best part of the twentieth century' (2000a, p.194).

Evidence presented here shows that eclectic practice was common but that Froebelian pedagogy provided the underpinning ethos.

## **2. Froebelians in London's Infant Schools: choosing the sample**

Infant school practice underwent changes from 1900 to 1939 although physical conditions hampered innovatory practice (Roe, in Board of Education, 1930-32). This chapter investigates the contribution of Froebelian teachers to these changes. Previous chapters have demonstrated that professional interest in new ideas was by no means confined to London, however, a number of those emerging from the data as key figures were active in London. In addition, considerations of access to archive sources led me to focus on schools in London. Possible schools for investigation were identified through witness evidence to the 1908 and 1933 Consultative Committees, references to schools and articles by teachers in *Child Life*, and in Froebel Society and FEI archives. A preliminary survey of textbooks also identified schools where Froebelian practice seemed to be evident (e.g. Wellock 1932; Boyce 1938). This identified a number of possibilities. To narrow the field, HMI reports were sought in the National Archives, and LCC Inspectors' reports and logbooks in the London Metropolitan Archive. Data describing practice, independent evaluations, and evidence of attitudes to innovation enabled a richer picture through triangulation.

Surviving records for many schools are sparse and do not provide detailed accounts of practice, thus, availability of rich primary records played a part in selection of schools. To supplement these, published accounts in secondary literature were consulted. This literature provided a lens through which to assess the validity of primary sources, but was not in itself unproblematic. As with autobiography and reminiscence, written and oral, where time may undermine memory, describing own practice was open to (possibly unintended) falsification to provide a positive gloss (Plummer 2001; McCulloch 2004). However, Froebelian infant teacher Frances Roe's account of her struggles with innovation, discussed below, suggests this was an overly pessimistic view (Roe 1933).

Records for Church Street, Hackney and Haselrigge, Capham infant schools, together with the public profile of their innovatory head teacher Mrs Shaw as a Consultative Committee witness, led to selection of her two schools. They represented the early phase of twentieth century practice. To illustrate later practice, the work of Frances Roe at the Marlborough and the Burghley was chosen; Roe played an important role in the Froebel movement as an interpreter of revisionist Froebelian pedagogy to elementary school teachers.

### **3. Froebelians and nursery schools: choosing the sample**

In addition to describing Froebelian contributions to changing practice in infant schools the chapter investigates practice in nursery schools in London; this complements the focus on London infant schools and on London's inspectors in Chapter Three. London provided a number of possible nursery schools for this research. The status of McMillan's Open-Air Nursery School in Deptford, of McMillan herself, and the survival of records, made this school a contender; however, McMillan's work there has been extensively discussed (Mansbridge 1932; Lowndes 1960; Bradburn 1989; Steedman 1990), consequently, I decided to focus on less well known examples. A number of organisations established nursery schools in this period; Mary Alfreda Coward worked at the nursery established by J.S. Lyons in 1918 until its closure in 1921 (FEI, 1914-16). The Women's University Settlement established a nursery school in Southwark, south east London, in 1927. St Leonards Nursery School opened in 1930 on the Foundling Hospital site in St Pancras, funded in the first instance by St Andrews School in Edinburgh; its head teacher in the early 1930s, Zillah Brown, gained a First Class Certificate from the Froebel training department at Clapham High School (NFU, 1914). Following McMillan's open-air model, schools lacking space for a conventional garden opened with roof top play spaces; St Christopher's and Sherborne Roof-Top Nursery Schools, St Pancras, provided paddling pools and sand pits on the roofs of new flats built by the St Pancras House Improvement Society as slum clearance schemes (Cusden 1938). The LCC also established schools; the original intention to include Old Church Road, Stepney and Columbia Market, Bethnal Green in this thesis was rejected on

grounds of space. These two schools, which opened in 1930, were considerably larger than the two nursery schools which are discussed below and which represent voluntary initiatives opened by FEI's principal Esther Lawrence: Notting Hill Nursery School [NHNS] (1908, originally Michaelis Free Kindergarten) and Somers Town Nursery School [STNS] (1910). Discussion of pedagogy in these schools builds on the account of FEI training in Chapter Six, which identified support for the schools by students and alumni; further, some students went on to work in them. Rich primary records survive from their foundation through to 1939, enabling an overview of changes across the period.

#### **4. Froebelians in infant schools**

The sub-sections which follow describe Froebelian practice by Mrs Shaw and Frances Roe in infant schools in London across the period from 1900 to 1939; they show how they became exemplars of practice for the LCC. Both Shaw and Roe were invited witnesses to the Consultative Committee, in 1908 and 1933 respectively and this analysis provides further evidence of Froebelians' redefinition of the educational landscape in Britain.

##### **4.1 Mrs Shaw: Church Street, Hackney and Haselrigge Road, Clapham**

Mrs Shaw began to develop innovative practice using kindergarten methods as Head Teacher at Church Street, Hackney in the 1890s; from 1905 she worked at Haselrigge Road, Clapham, south west London, remaining there until 1919. The logbook survives but, inexplicably, her final entry is in 1916 (LCC. Logbooks. Haselrigge, 1887-1913, 1913-32). Shaw was an invited witness to the 1908 Consultative Committee; her evidence articulated a strong Froebelian stance towards her work, particularly in her conception of the babies' room: '[it] must imitate the home as much as possible, and must not be regarded as a school at all...A kindergarten atmosphere should pervade work and play' (Board of Education, 1908, p.101). Shaw regarded the babies' room as learning environment and play space. A number of Shaw's staff undertook Froebel training; logbook entries recorded absences for

examinations in teaching time. It is possible that Shaw encouraged staff to take this training, which was required by the LCC for head teachers of infant schools.

Shaw's logbook entries show how she used Froebel materials in the different divisions of her school. Stick-laying was used for number work in Standard One, including for individual tests, and children were given Gift IV for free block building. As part of nature work children were questioned on past observation lessons, for example of school pets; they were encouraged to depict the bee through free drawing. Children worked freely with clay and Shaw examined the results, but there were also guided activities when children used clay for representational purposes; children in Standard One used clay to represent 'Acqua the waterdrop story'. Shaw used a variety of materials in end of term exams: 'Term exams this week. Various forms of expression work e.g. toy-making – clay work – drawing – sandwork- rafia [sic] – (free and under direction)' (LCC. Logbooks. Haselrigge, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1910). Shaw described activities in the Baby Room: 'This week – baby room. Gifts occupations – songs – games' (ibid, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1912). Other Froebelian Occupations included paper-cutting and paper leaving [sic]. Open days for parents showed children working with Froebelian occupations: 'Children of St. I "at home" to their parents this afternoon. Drawing – painting- Recitation – Claywork etc – Singing – Games – Needlework changed for Drawing & Claywork' (ibid, 18<sup>th</sup> July 1907). This signified an effort by Shaw to educate parents in the value of play methods.

Shaw's evidence to the Consultative Committee laid stress on Froebelian practices, particularly nature study: sand for seed-planting and making sand pies, care of animals, such as goldfish, silkworms and doves. An example of Shaw's experimentation was her instigation of Saturday outings for Church Street children to Epping Forest to collect nature study samples (LCC. Managers' reports, 1903). At Haselrigge, nature study included visits to support story-telling: 'A small party of children from St.1 (13) went to Oxshott today with Miss Powrie and Head Teacher to observe autumn tints – to become acquainted with pine wood in connection with story of Hiawatha – and to collect chestnuts, acorns, cones, leaves etc' (LCC. Logbooks. Haselrigge, 27<sup>th</sup> October 1906). The story of Hiawatha was particularly popular in Froebelian schools; its story of activities in the natural world fitted the focus on

what was termed 'correlation', 'projects' or 'centres of interest' in this period, discussed in Chapter Eight.

#### **4.1.1 The view of Inspectors**

Inspection reports consistently testified to Inspectors' satisfaction with Shaw's work; they recorded her use of kindergarten methods and the reputation she gained. Her engagement with new educational ideas was also noted. At Church Street, the Board of Education Inspector reported: '[t]his is one of the brightest and most pleasant Infants' schools with which I am acquainted. Kindergarten methods are largely employed, and the greatest care is taken to make the children's school-life happy, to excite in them a love for their work, and to teach them to observe' (LCC. Inspectors' reports. Church Street, 1892). Shaw's experimentation and competence was regularly praised: 'care, originality and admirable skill' (ibid, 1898); 'thoughtful, ingenious, admirable' (ibid, 1899). Shaw's work, and the comments of male inspectors, suggest that Bathurst's blanket criticism, made in her contribution to the 1905 report of Women Inspectors and quoted in Chapter Three, were not entirely justified.

At Haselrigge, reports on Shaw's practice continued to record her dedication to trying out new methods: 'plans, schemes and time-tables are admirable and her efforts have been met with loyalty and willingness. The work is modern and well-illustrated and there is much physical as well as mental activity' (LCC. Inspectors' reports. Haselrigge, 1908). In 1914, the Council's Inspector reported in detail on the infant school. Shaw's staff were experimenting by including Froebel's occupations as part of activities such as story-telling: 'Miss Gregory is specially able in illustration of stories, etc, by models in clay, sand etc' (ibid, 1914). Handwork by the 'babies' was described as 'full and varied'; the art Inspector was full of praise for work throughout the school: '[t]he intelligence shown by these little people in the Drawing and other Handwork is remarkable, and testifies to the careful and effective training they receive' (ibid). The report's summary stressed the use of innovative practice drawing on new educational ideas:

The head teacher...has brought to bear upon her school an intimate knowledge of modern educational thought. While the work is sound in its essentials, novel and interesting features abound. Among these may be mentioned the group work of the babies' room, the wealth and originality of the illustrations used...and the variety of applications of handwork (ibid).

The LCC Inspector reported in 1910 that Shaw was 'well versed in and thoroughly sympathetic towards approved modern methods...The teachers follow a wise and sympathetic lead – take pains over preparation and work, and in spite of the large size of many classes, achieve very creditable results.' (ibid, 1910). What was important was Shaw's ability to carry her staff with her. In the 1930s Roe reported resistance by her teachers to introduction of freer practices which might threaten results (Roe, in Board of Education, 1930-1932; Roe 1933). Shaw overcame the constraints of classrooms, and possible reluctance by staff to abandon old methods, through dedication to principles and, it would appear, sheer force of personality.

Official recognition of Shaw's achievements was demonstrated by an invitation to serve as witness to the 1908 Consultative Committee. Morant's hand in selecting witnesses was shown in Chapter Four; choice of Shaw may reflect Morant's desire to ensure representation of a particular educational approach. Her work was also recognised by her employers; Charles Kimmins, LCC Chief Inspector, child psychologist and sometime Chair of Council of the Child Study Society, invited Shaw to open a discussion on nursery schools at a teachers' conference in 1909: 'Miss Ravenhill and Miss Heaven will read papers on the Physical Training and Mental and Moral Training, respectively, of children under 5, and I shall be very much obliged if you will open the discussion in a speech of about 10 minutes' (LCC. Logbooks. Haselrigge, 9th December 1908). Inclusion of Ravenhill and Shaw shows strong Froebelian representation at an important point for development of nursery school discourse within the LCC.

#### **4.1.2 Visitors: Shaw's schools as exemplars of Froebelian pedagogy, 1899 - 1919**

Shaw's work earned her a reputation which ensured numerous visitors from home and overseas. The Managers' Report for Church Street in 1899 recorded: 'several visitors of distinction have been to the school during the last year, both from abroad and at home – persons interested in education, and especially in Kindergarten methods – a fact which points to this department having a high reputation' (LCC. Managers' reports. Church Street, 1899). Some visitors were directed to the school by HMIs: 'received letter from Miss Tanner Mistress of Practising school for Salisbury Training College stating that HMI had recommended her to visit Haselrigge School (Infants Dept) re modern methods in drawing' (LCC. Logbook. Haselrigge, 1887-1913, 13<sup>th</sup> February). Students from training colleges came on one day visits to observe methods and note time-tabling procedures (ibid, 8<sup>th</sup> March 1906); some took more extended training over several weeks, as in September 1906. The school was used for teaching practice, for example, by students from Stockwell Training College in 1907 and as a practising school for students from Greystoke Place Training College in 1908-09. Timetables were sometimes altered to give visitors a fuller picture of Shaw's methods, as when Miss Gore from Chicago visited in 1907: 'From 9.55 – 10.30 expression and occupations – drawing and nature work taken to give her as much experience of our methods as limited stay would allow' (ibid, 7<sup>th</sup> March 1907). Significantly, in July 1911, the school was visited by American teachers visiting England on a Froebel Pilgrimage. The group included teachers from Massachusetts, Wisconsin and Boston; they 'complimented staff on the Froebelian spirit animating the work also on the bright spontaneity of children' (ibid, 13<sup>th</sup> July 1911). The visitors show that Shaw's practice, explicitly grounded in Froebelian principles, provided an effective model for students in training and for implementation in other schools, and that this was officially endorsed by the LCC and the Board of Education.

Shaw's innovative work in these two schools was grounded in a Froebelian pedagogy adapted to the requirements and constraints of state infant schools. Evidence shows that Shaw abandoned the symbolic and mystical trappings with which Froebel imbued his materials and activities. Her practice is thus an early example of the revisionist reading of Froebel which advocated activity and response to children's interests as a route to, *inter alia*, language development and the fostering of caring attitudes.



#### **4.2 Frances Roe: Berkshire Road, Hackney, the “Marlborough”, Chelsea and the “Burghley”, Kentish Town**

Frances Roe worked in a number of London infant schools, mostly in poor neighbourhoods; an early post was as Clara Grant's assistant in Devons Road Infant School in Bow. She described Grant as 'a most enlightened head teacher (Roe 1933, p.1). Roe gained the Froebel Certificate in 1908 through private study. Given her later prominence, her grades for the elementary exam were poor; she attained just 27% for class teaching, although this increased to 57% for the Higher Certificate.

In the schools discussed here Roe carried out experimentation with school organisation and methods which became the subject of discussion in articles and textbooks in the 1930s and later. Indeed, Nancy Catty's announcement of Roe's death noted that '[t]eachers flocked to see her theories put into practice both at “The Marlborough” and “The Burghley”' (Catty 1944, p.1). This may represent a degree of death bed hyperbole; however, Roe's prominence in the Froebel movement at this time is shown by the frequency with which her name appeared in published and archive material. Significantly, Roe was one of just fifteen invited individual witnesses to the 1933 Consultative Committee. Catty described Roe, and other contributors to *Modern Education of Young Children*, as 'good Froebelians' who knew in theory what should be done, i.e. 'to stand aside and learn from the children what they wanted to do, wished to learn and how they wished to learn it' (Catty 1933, p.vii), but had to contend with unsuitable conditions of premises, class sizes and teaching traditions. Roe's chapters drew strongly on Froebelian principles to describe the experimental work in her infant schools, and the difficulties encountered, in language imbued with Froebelian terminology. Her account of changes in infant school teaching since she began her career echoed earlier critiques (Lyschinska 1886; Bathurst 1905); the inspection regime, as she first experienced it, hindered experimentation, with requirements for accurate maintenance of registers and adherence to the time-table (Roe 1933); however, later inspectors encouraged introduction of radical experiments. For Roe, the conversation lesson was a particular 'nightmare of the day', based on a list of objects chosen not by the children but by the head

teacher; children could only speak when invited to do so (ibid). Roe concluded that it was essential to draw on children's own interests and to substitute 'learning by doing' for conversation lessons (ibid).

#### **4.2.1 Berkshire Road, 1921: experiments with individual methods and group work**

Around 1921, Roe attended Nancy Catty's course for those taking the Froebel Trainer's Diploma (Catty 1944). While still headmistress of Barlby Road Infants, North Kensington, Roe visited Mellitus Street Infant School, Old Oak, where Mrs Anderson experimented with Montessori pedagogy over some fifteen years; Roe's interest in Montessori pedagogy led to introduction of individual methods at Berkshire Road (Roe 1933). This showed that Froebelians were open to new practical approaches, as they were to new ideas; in comparison, Montessori refused to visit the Marlborough, where Roe's predecessor, Jessie Mackinder, was experimenting with her methods, as 'she would there see her own ideas plagiarized, and her own apparatus wantonly caricatured' (Ballard 1937, cited in Selleck 1972, p.43). However, experimental changes were not without failures or other difficulties. Roe's Montessori experiments entailed a move from class teaching to individual work and attempting to make individual apparatus for classes of over fifty children. Difficulties in providing such large quantities of apparatus and in knowing which stage each child had reached quickly became apparent. Problems of materials becoming mixed up and inadequate storage facilities were further practical impediments. Roe then tried a blended approach, with Froebelian group work alongside individual testing. Despite successful results, support from Inspectors, and the invitation to be a witness to the 1933 Consultative Committee, she was not content with the balance between teacher and pupil initiated activities. The teacher remained 'the most important and prominent person in the room' (Roe 1933, p.12); rather, the school had to be child-centred, allowing their play and spontaneous energy deriving from 'a child's natural interests' to be the focal point (ibid, p.13). Roe perceived the risks involved in her radical experiment; despite the support of 'a very sympathetic inspector' (ibid, p.13); she acknowledged that teachers might find it difficult to dispense with methods attaining good results: "What...will happen if the play does not turn out to be a preparation for the tool subjects? What if they never want to learn to read or write?" (ibid, p.15-16).

#### **4.2.2 The “Marlborough”, 1928: child-centred experimentation**

Roe succeeded Mackinder in 1928 as Head Teacher of the “Marlborough”, Demonstration School for Whitelands Training College from 1919; here she first implemented a fully child-centred approach with children aged five to eight. Roe described the experiment in her evidence to the 1933 Consultative Committee; she answered her hypothetical question in her account of how group handwork on local stalls developed, from a child's suggestion, into a project on ‘stores’, which addressed the three ‘R’s and other curriculum subjects. Forty two children, just under six years, visited Harrods’ Stores, local to the school and where many parents worked. The group work which followed entailed literacy and numeracy skills, geography, and dramatic role-play; it fostered interest in learning, initiative and happiness, leading to benefits for all school life. Roe entrusted her assistant teacher, E.R. Boyce, with implementation of the experiment. Boyce had a particular interest in new methods and her textbooks are discussed in Chapter Eight, including an account of the project (Boyce [1932]).

Such work was a challenge in the physical environment which still prevailed at the Marlborough, as at other London schools. In her evidence to the Committee, Roe reported handicaps to her experimentation. In 1931 her classrooms still had stepped seating and large class sizes; in the early stage of the experiment space was at a premium, although she acknowledged improvements, but only due to unspecified ‘local circumstances’ (Board of Education, 1930-32). Teachers trained in, and with long experience of, formal methods was a further difficulty. This pointed to the need for the kind of post-qualification training in new methods which the Froebel Society provided at its summer schools and lectures to advance professional understanding and practice.

#### **4.2.3 The “Burghley”, 1932: a Froebelian elementary school**

Roe took on the headship of the Burghley, a large school with five hundred places in 1932. The 1935 inspection report described the school as popular, with children travelling ‘comparatively long

distances' to attend (LCC. Inspectors' reports. The Burghley, 1935). The report noted that the social composition of the pupils was changing, with many mothers 'now forced to go out to work' (ibid), resulting in more children under five being enrolled; this resulted in provision of an open-air class for less robust children. Even so, the report stated that the school was fortunate in having 'less need for social work of a rescue kind than many infants' schools have to undertake' (ibid) which diverted focus away from purely educational activities. The school's logbook did not provide details of Roe's classroom activities or departures from the normal timetable. Instead, she simply recorded '[s]ee individual mistresses' timetables in respective rooms' (LCC. Logbooks. The Burghley, n.d.); for her own teaching she wrote '[s]ee Head-teacher's diary' (ibid). Unfortunately, neither individual room timetables nor Roe's diary seem to have survived, however, In 1943 Roe published an account of practice at the Burghley, 'a Froebelian Elementary School' (Roe 1943). Her educational philosophy was to 'stimulate children's natural impulses of curiosity, experiment and inquiry, and yet leave room for each individual child to *learn by doing* at his or her own rate' (Roe op.cit., p.2). The school had children aged from three to seven and a half in three divisions, Nursery, Middle and Top, described in the 1935 Inspection Report as the babies, the bridge and the upper school. Two LCC conferences led by Susan Isaacs in 1935 were described as 'play, work and the bridge between' (Anon 1935). This terminology reflected Froebel's structure of kindergarten, transition class and upper school. At the Burghley, nursery activities focused entirely on free play with sand, water, blocks and a Wendy House, with stories, meals and sleep. Roe acknowledged a socialisation agenda; the child 'learns to live with his neighbours – he learns how to wait at table and how to eat and drink properly' (Roe, 1943, p.3). The Middle division represented the Froebelian transition class; play continued but attention was paid to developing 'tool' subjects (ibid) – step by step and according to the child's wishes:

'[t]he desire to read grew directly out of all the play activities. Given sufficient time and with patience and faith on the part of the teacher, the child in the long run always asks simply and naturally to read and write about what he is interested in (ibid).

In the Top division the 'centre of interest' predominated; one project involved children visiting Euston station and walking through the Silver Jubilee train. Roe's views on how curriculum subjects were met

by such work had changed; she now acknowledged that additional time needed to be given to practice work in the three 'Rs' as not enough opportunity was available in working out the centre of interest. Roe worked with children from very poor families and this may signify that project work could only meet all children's educational needs if they were supported at home.

#### **4.2.3.1 The view of Inspectors**

Three years after Roe's appointment an inspection was carried out by LCC inspectors including Senior Woman Inspector E. Stevenson and Sanson, Inspector of Infants' Methods (LCC. Inspectors' reports. The Burghley, 1935). As with HMIs, LCC inspectors worked in particular divisions, thus Sanson's name appears in reports on other infant schools. The report noted that the school was 'in good repute with educational administrators' and noted the consequences, in the number of visitors and its use as a centre for observations for the 1935 conferences on infant school methods led by Isaacs, referred to above. Roe's enthusiasm was noted, but also her 'tactful handling of her staff'; eight were over forty, and three of these over fifty, so their training was likely to have been in formal methods. Despite the staff's devotion to Roe, it appeared that she had not entirely succeeded in persuading all of them of the soundness of her methods; teachers '*for the most part* believe in the power of the child to educate itself if set in the midst of suitable conditions' and '*some of* the older mistresses had adapted themselves to changes in method with goodwill and considerable success' (ibid, emphases added). The inspectors concluded that the freedom left to teachers 'to work out their own salvation by experiment' might be supported by establishing landmarks to guide staff in planning their work and evaluating their success. This implicit criticism was set within a framework of comments which were overwhelmingly positive.

#### **4.2.3.2 Visitors: the "Burghley" as exemplar of Froebelian pedagogy**

Logbook entries recorded large numbers of visitors from the UK and overseas; international visitors came from South Africa, Japan, Canada, New Zealand. An Indian princess and a teacher from Palestine sent by Isaacs also came to the school. British visitors included groups of teachers and head

teachers from Grimsby and Walthamstow; staff from training colleges, such as Maria Grey and Saffron Walden, sometimes alone or with groups of students. Dorothy Gardner visited with twenty five students from Chichester; Gardner had taken Isaacs' Child Development Course at the Institute of Education and was appointed as successor to Isaacs on her death in 1948. Isaacs sent visitors in connection with her course and personally visited in 1936. De Lissa came with students from Gypsy Hill (then developing nursery school training). Groups of students came from FEI, as did lecturer Elsa Walters; Froebel students from Bedford and Rachel McMillan Colleges also visited. Some came to observe specific divisions of the school, for example nursery school trainees from Maria Grey viewed work in the babies' room. The school was used by St Gabriel's' College, Stockwell for observation and teaching practice; St Gabriel's' was a Church of England training college for women established by London School Board member, Canon Charles Brookes, in 1899 (Culham Institute 2011) Frequent visits were made by HMI's (including Monkhouse, Hill and Greaves), and LCC inspectors (including Sanson). A number of visitors came to see Roe about Froebel Society work; notable were Brown Smith, Raymont, Catty and Phyllis Woodham Smith, Deputy Principal, Maria Grey College and contributor to Evelyn Lawrence's history of the Froebel movement (Lawrence 1952). Organisations which sent representatives included the Home and School Council [name indecipherable] and Mr Bretherton, New Education Fellowship, in 1938.

Roe was absent from the school on many occasions during her headship; many of these were associated with unspecified 'Froebel work'. Other absences were to visit schools and training colleges, for summer schools and (at Chichester) a refresher course. No details were provided for this, but it showed encouragement for, and Roe's interest in, ongoing professional development. She lectured across the U.K. including Hull, Leeds, Liverpool and Bolton, here specifically for the Froebel Society. Subsequently, a head-teacher of a nursery school from Bolton visited the school, showing how branch activities led to dissemination of practice. Roe also recorded absences due to Froebel examining work; the school was itself used for Froebel examinations, thus was closely associated with Froebelian activity.

Roe's dedication to providing a model of Froebelian practice is shown in Catty's obituary; she described "Miss Roe's school" – a Saturday morning demonstration class held at the school and with its children 'in order that the class might see how a Froebelian school worked and played' (Catty 1944, p.2). Catty noted Roe's acknowledgement to Dewey and argued that 'she, more than any teacher I know, showed how the theories of these two men could be applied in the average infant school, with its large classes and, very often, unsuitable surroundings and equipment' (ibid, p.1). It was precisely the model she presented that made her work of such significance.

## **5. Froebelians in nursery schools: Notting Hill and Somers Town Nursery Schools**

The previous sections have demonstrated the significance of Froebelian contributions to infant school pedagogy in this period; those which follow describe practice in two London nursery schools from 1900 to 1939 and show how Froebelian pedagogy was implemented in these schools and reflected contemporary discourse surrounding the education of working class children below compulsory school age.

Notting Hill Nursery School [NHNS] opened as Michaelis Free Kindergarten in 1908 in rooms rented from the Notting Hill Day Nursery. Originally with just eight children, it moved into its own house in St Ann's Villas in 1909 and was re-named in 1915. The school received grant following the 1918 Education Act, and was recognised by the Board of Education in 1920. The consequences were quickly felt: '[w]e now have frequent visits of Inspectors' (NHNS, 1921, p.1); age regulations required them to take 'many more real babies' and to lose the 'big ones' to the elementary schools (Fairbairn 1920, p.5). Somers Town Nursery School [STNS] opened in Crowndale Road, St Pancras in 1910 and remained there until evacuation in 1939; it did not reopen as the local authority opened other schools in the locality. Records have survived for both schools, held in the Froebel Archive for Childhood Studies, Roehampton University; other sources drawn on here include reports in *The Link*. No published history exists for either school; however, a brief account of NHNS was included in appendices to the 1933

Consultative Committee report. Written descriptions and photographs promoting the work of the schools were arguably staged written and visual performances, thus need to be treated with caution as documentary evidence (Grosvenor 1999; Burke 2001; Grosvenor 2001; Rousmaniere 2001; Read 2008; Nawrotzki 2009).

The prospectus for Michaelis Free Kindergarten specifically associated its foundation with contemporary debate on attendance of children under five in elementary schools (Notting Hill Nursery School, 1908). The consequences of exclusion and failure to make alternative provision were seen by Lawrence as she journeyed through London prior to opening the NHNS in 1908 and impelled her to action:

On our bus ride home from Colet Gardens we used to pass through one of the most sordid streets of London lodging houses. Half-naked babies crawled up and down the filthy doorsteps, pale-faced, ragged children swarmed on the pavement, or dodged in and out of the traffic...Miss Lawrence would speak with passion of the needs of childhood, of the right of all children, rich and poor, to share the good things of life – green fields to run on, trees to climb, contact with the clean earth, pure air to breathe. Such was the heritage of childhood, and it was for us to struggle to achieve this end' (Anon 1945, p.13-14).

Exclusion of children led to the 'alarming extent' of the increase of young children on the streets (STNS, 1916, p.1). The discourse of risk associated with street play in this literature reflected, in part, contemporary eugenic concerns (Read 2010a). Vice-presidents of STNS included figures involved in the eugenic and child study movements; Mrs Gotto (Honorary Secretary, Eugenics Society), Lawrence's cousin, Samuel Alexander from Manchester, T.N. Kelynack (editor, *The Child*), John Langdon Down, who gave his name to Down's syndrome, George Shuttleworth and Francis Warner. Shuttleworth was Superintendent of Royal Albert Asylum, Lancaster from 1870-1893 and then studied insanity and the problems of 'mentally-deficient' children, in particular. This representation was significant given the *zeitgeist*; possibly, supporters saw free kindergartens and nursery schools in similar light to the special schools and asylums established to contain the 'feeble-minded' and to address imperialist concerns surrounding racial decline (Read 2004c).



Lawrence maintained an active role involved in management and funding of the schools and held regular entertainments for children and mothers at Roehampton. She hosted Christmas parties and rarely failed to visit children on the summer holiday (Anon 1945, p.14). Survival of STNS, prior to receipt of government grant, was largely due to Lawrence, her family and personal friends (ibid). Writing in 1952, Jebb described Lawrence as 'a true Froebelian in her deep concern for children's welfare, especially in her concern for the deprived and neglected child' (1952, p.9). Nevertheless, alongside Lawrence's indubitable compassion were moral concerns which shaped practice in the schools. She represented late Victorian and Edwardian philanthropic effort which found its outlet, not in indiscriminate charity, but in practical schemes intended to morally improve and strengthen 'character' in its recipients (Himmelfarb 1991). Women were not averse to 'slumming', some merely intent on viewing the poor at first hand (Koven 2004), but others to work with them through settlement communities (Vicinus 1985), as health visitors to homes and in clinics or, as here, in nursery school work (Hardy 1912; Grant 1929; Grant c1940). The description of Lawrence's journey through the streets of Notting Dale in search of premises is an example of women's interventions in poverty as 'slum travellers' (Ross 2007)

## **5.1 Froebelians in the schools**

The schools were run by paid, certificated teachers and by voluntary helpers, some of them mothers but also girls from local school; some were former pupils. Lily Leatherdale was described as 'a valuable helper' in the NHNS inspection report of 1936 (Board of Education, 1936). Lily Reed (FEI, 1899-1901) was a shining example of devoted service as Superintendent of NHNS for thirty eight years, seeing the school through its war-time evacuation before retiring. Reed's first post was at Challoner Street, FEI's Practising School opened instead of the intended free kindergarten in 1899. Reed's other work included membership (alongside Jebb) of Save the Children Fund's national committee, which established emergency open air nursery schemes in areas of acute unemployment during the 1920s and 30s; her account of the schemes stressed that they were intended to utilize help from unemployed parents (Reed 1933). At NHNS, Reed instituted an adoption scheme in 1935 whereby subscribers

paid £3.10s to maintain a child at the school. This covered the deficit between grants to the school and the actual cost of the services. By 1938, eighteen children had been 'adopted' by individuals, schools, Women's Institutes and Guide and Ranger groups. The children were sometimes visited by the subscribers and received presents on birthdays and at Christmas; one child and mother were taken to the seaside by the adoptive school while another child was treated to a day in the country and the mother to a 'much-needed set of teeth' (NHNS, 1938, p.12). Such initiatives seem to have been widespread in this period (Brehony and Nawrotzki 2003). Lilian Arundel (FEI, 1901-04), Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of NHNS, supported the school through work and financial gifts. In 1912, Arundel held a picnic in Richmond Park to celebrate the Coronation and gave each child a mug (Reed 1912, p.10). She died three weeks after the birth of her first child in 1913; her obituary highlighted her work for poor children and the legacy which enabled NHNS and STNS to buy their own holiday homes at Burwash Common, Sussex and Somers Cottage, Cross-in-Hand, Sussex (Anon 1914).

Kathleen Stokes (FEI 1907-1909) became Superintendent of STNS in 1911 and remained there until 1932; she took charge of the new nursery school at Colet Gardens, working with a wealthier group of children, for a year before retiring (Stokes 1933). Before her appointment to STNS, Stokes gained experience in a children's hospital and spent a year as an assistant at NHNS. Consequently, she would have been well aware of the demands of the work. Her focus on the individual child was stressed on her retirement from STNS:

[S]he has given the care to the physical and spiritual needs of Somers Town babies which has made for happiness in two generations...and looked on each child as an individual, giving him just the thought, the personal attention, the training that he especially needs (STNS, 1931-2, p.2)

Apart from supplying trained staff, FEI alumni also gave voluntary help, alongside students in training; one important role was supporting staff during summer holidays in the country:

The summer holiday this year was spent at Heronsgate, where fifty six children enjoyed three happy weeks, returning brown and well. Our helpers consisted entirely of students, past and present, and I think they enjoyed the holiday as much as the children' (Reed 1926, p.12)

Reed noted that '[t]he Nursery School has many friends among the students' (ibid); children were Guild members in 1910 gave presents of all kinds: pictures, frames, clocks, bulbs, handkerchiefs, socks and other clothes, Froebel's Gifts Five and Six and tickets for the Zoo. Reed noted that '[t]he Nursery School has many friends among the students' (ibid); children were taken to Roehampton for tea in Grove House, the 18<sup>th</sup> century former country house, and entertained by students; no personal responses have emerged to this experience. Reports in college magazines gave details of events; in 1930 the Musical Society raised money through carol-singing. More significant support came from the Nursery School Society, founded to stimulate interest in the nursery school movement; this had a large membership as nearly all students joined and it supported both schools. Students raised money from subscriptions, carol singing and fines for lost property. They helped at parents' meetings, at the Christmas party held for both schools at Roehampton, and at fund raising entertainments. Students in the Social Circles were thanked for sewing, providing jerseys, and toys and dolls at Christmas (Lyle 1914, p.11). This documentation of support from Froebel students suggested that being Froebelian entailed an element of service and sacrifice; reporting this work in *The Link* built expectations that students would engage in this work.

## **5.2 Practice in the schools: developing the mind**

The nursery schools intended to remove children from the perils of the gutter, providing instead opportunities to play and to learn through Froebelian activities (Read 2010a). Lawrence echoed Froebel in proclaiming '[w]e must go into the streets and *show the children how to play*' (Reed 1945, p.6, added emphasis). This suggests children's street activities were not regarded as 'real' or acceptable play. While street play undoubtedly carried risks, its possible learning potential was ignored (Read, op.cit.). Photographs from the two schools show children playing outdoors with the Froebel Gifts, engaged in

brushwork and ring games. There were outdoor sand pits and, as the period progressed, climbing frames. Accounts of how the schools could fit children for future useful lives reflected contemporary eugenic concerns:

One child came to the school three years ago almost an idiot...No one would recognise her now in the handy little maiden who is constantly sent to deliver messages about the house...When she leaves the Nursery school this year she will be fit to take her place among the other children in a Council school. If it had not been for the care and training she has received it is almost certain she would have been an imbecile (STNS, 1913, p.1-2)

However, contemporary commentators had mixed views of the possibility of ameliorating mental deficiency in schools (Read 2004c; Read and Walmsley 2006). Arthur Tredgold, a key eugenicist and advocate of sterilisation, took a pessimistic stance, arguing for permanent institutionalisation of children (Tredgold 1911); teachers in the new special schools were more optimistic. Arguably, both groups were concerned to lay claim to professional expertise in this new area of practice..

### **5.3 Practice in the schools: developing the body**

A prime focus of the nursery schools was addressing children's physical deficiencies; as in Froebel's Blankenburg kindergarten (Froebel 1842), children were bathed on arrival, if required, and provided with clean clothes. Good habits were inculcated through toothbrush and handkerchief drill and hand-washing before meals. Children's conversations about home life showed that essentials for cleanliness were infrequently found in poor homes; instead, they were supplied by the schools: "[u]ncle's got a toothbrush," said one child, "and we can all use it when we like" (Grant c1940, p.45). Similarly, with handkerchiefs, providing them gave the right 'to demand the real thing for the daily handkerchief drill, though we did now and then accept a piece of rag or paper, and even the corner of an old Union Jack' (ibid). Mrs Angus, Manager of NHNS, looked back on her experiences some years later:

We recall the dirt (every child had at one time to be bathed at school, every day)... the neglect of the children, often with their clothes sewn on them from one week to the next, or tied to a table leg while parents were out' (Angus 1946, p.11)

Angus claimed that health inspections carried out by the School Nurse were 'the first' (ibid). Medical treatment provided through the School Doctor Service, was carried for NHNS children at the Red Cross Centre in Holland Park Gardens; like dental care, this was free of charge. STNS worked with local services in St Pancras, including the School for Mothers, Tuberculosis Dispensary and Council for Welfare of Children, providing a model of multidisciplinary services. This was essential to meet the needs of young children who fell into a gap in health provision; after baby clinics and before inspection in elementary schools private arrangements were essential for treatment (Cooter 1992).

#### **5.4 Practice in the schools: a civilising agenda**

Froebelians' civilizing agenda was evident in the prospectus for the Michaelis Free Kindergarten. Improvement of manners and habits and development of caring attitudes towards peers and pets were high on the agenda. It was put forcefully in the 1917 Deed of Trust; this included an additional objective: 'to promote health, cleanliness, morality, sobriety and useful knowledge amongst children of the poorer classes' (NHNS, 1917). Defects in upbringing needed to be addressed: 'the swearing of even two-year-olds who could hardly speak at all, the thieving amongst the parents ("Where did you get that nice new coat?" "Farver pinched it")' (Angus 1946, p.11). Reporting of children's speech may have been intended to convey a naturalistic impression; it was also expressive of the agenda to impose hegemonic middle class norms, in this case eradication of perceived working class speech defects (Bernstein 1977).

Descriptions of practice showed how the moral benefits of nursery education, delineated by witnesses to the 1908 Consultative Committee, and by infant school innovators such as Robert Owen at New Lanark from 1816 (1969) and Samuel Wilderspin from the 1820- 40s (1832), were implemented:

They are trained to be useful...It is interesting to see them sweeping or dusting a room, washing their dusters and dolls' clothes, polishing the furniture, their shoes, and anything which needs polishing...When new children are first allowed to wash and clean and polish they make a great "mess" and disorder seems to be the order of the day...[but] gradually give way to cleanliness and order, and *visitors are struck by the quick and expert operations of the children* (STNS, 1911-12, p.1-2, emphasis added)

Reports by teachers of children's conversations stressed inculcation of good habits: "[i]t is nice to come here where it's so clean, it is so dirty up at our place"; the writer commented '[t]hey are realizing the value of cleanliness and order, and will surely want more and more to have in there [sic] own homes the good things they see in the Nursery, things that *should* be in every home' (STNS, 1919-20, p.3; original emphasis). These quotations need to be read with a view to their role as publicising the benefits of the work of the schools, intended, at least in part, to convey the practical benefits to actual and potential supporters of the schools (Nawrotzki 2009).

Froebelian nursery school activities contributed to the schools' civilising agenda; nature study entailed care of plants and animals. Importantly, for these future parents, nurturing was extended to peers:

[t]he bigger children love taking care of the wee ones. They nearly fight sometimes to get possession of the babies in order to "mother" them...Even the tiniest of the babies learn to be unselfish and kind to one another through playing with the various toys (STNS, 1921-22, p.2).

Music and singing were part of the routine in these schools; Froebel highlighted the expressive qualities of these activities (Froebel 1898) but they also had a 'refining influence' on children (STNS, 1922-23, p.2).

This was noted by advocates of infant education such as Thomas Pole:

singing for the most part has the effect of tranquillizing the turbulent, and of subduing the unruly passions and produces in the infant a frame of feeling so humble and teachable that I

always think it expedient to open the school with this exercise (Pole, cited in Clarke 1985, p.79)

Thus, music and singing helped the schools to fulfil their civilising agenda. Similarly, providing meals satisfied children's nutritional needs, but enabled staff to inculcate good manners - serving others first, use of cutlery:

The dinner hour still continues to be one of the most valuable times of the day, when manners play an important part. It is at this time the children learn that a feeder, not a sleeve, is the right thing to wipe the mouth with, that fingers are not to be put into their plates of soup, etc. A little waiter is chosen for each table every day who is responsible for good behaviour at that table and must see that all are served before sitting down to his or her own dinner (STNS, 1913, p23)

Photographs show children sitting at tables and being served by other children; tablecloths, plates and cutlery were carefully set out and the meal was followed by washing-up; as with written accounts, such photographs served a propaganda function. Grant expressed regret at the usurping of the family meal but recognised that these rarely occurred for the children at her school in Bow: '[s]chool meals, again, I hated because I prefer the family meal around the family table...[but] the room [was] so small...that the meal became more of a picnic than an orderly circle' (Grant c1940, p.34). Even so, these efforts were inappropriate for some home circumstances; as Grant noted: '[g]iving my babies a lesson in Laying the Table for Tea and hoping to elicit the necessary "tray" I said "What does Mother always have in front of her"? "A baby!"' (ibid, p. 43).

## **5.5 The country holiday: health, morals and language**

Nature study and outdoor play came together in the summer holidays, an annual event which began for children at NHNS in 1910. Long days spent in the country in the open air, away from crowded, polluted London streets provided opportunities to expand children's limited horizons, particularly with regard to the natural world.

[F]or six weeks in the year our children...live for a short time a new life, in which they receive a totally new set of impressions, in which the sights and sounds and smells of the slums are replaced by those of the peaceful Sussex country. For six weeks they breathe the pure air blown from the sea, they run barefoot on soft grass, they wander at will in the sunshine and shade of garden and woods; becoming brown and strong and beautiful (NHNS, 1928, p.14)

Such descriptions expressed typically Froebelian notions of the superiority of the rural environment and embodied a moral dimension, reflecting Rousseauian conceptions of the corruption of the urban social world.

Accounts of children's reactions on seeing the sea for the first time showed how holidays expanded their thinking:

Tom Farley cried out, "My, ain't it big!" but little Billy Brackenbury was disappointed, and only said, "Is that all?" ...We noticed the incoming tide as we started home, and Herbert Perry said, 'The sea will all be wasted; there won't be much sand tomorrow.' Billy Brackenbury was worried, and declared that the sea was leaking (Anon 1910, p.17-18)

Holidays also provided an extended period away from home to work on behaviour, manners and language, and to address children's physical needs (Read 2010a).

## **5.6 Working with and on parents**

Froebel's intentions for the kindergarten were to work closely with parents (Froebel 1842). As in America, where free kindergartens became 'quickly recognised as a social agency, as a means of getting hold of neglected children, and of reaching "slum" mothers through their children' (Murray c1912, p3), evidence showed that this was the case with these nursery schools. Nursery schools were conceptualised as a 'Centre of Humanizing Influence' by Sarah Young, Mistress of Method, Home and Colonial College (Young 1911, p.541). Transformation of working class family life, particularly education of mothers in the virtues of cleanliness and care, was a central objective for Lawrence.



Accounts characterised working class mothers as initially unwilling and suspicious but won over by middle class benefactors (Lewis 1986; Ross 1990); Stokes recalled that '[t]he first few children had literally to be picked from the gutter and their mothers persuaded to bring them to the Nursery School' (1933, p.34).

The nursery schools set up Parents Associations, not simply as a focus for social activity but 'to educate the mothers and improve the homes' (Anon 1945, p.14). These benefits underpinned arguments by George Newman, Chief Medical Officer, Board of Education, in particular, for nursery schools prior to the 1918 Education Act (Brehony 2009c) and reflected contemporary maternalist discourse which blamed mothers for deficiencies of child welfare (Lewis 1980; Ross 1993). Monthly evening clubs for mothers at the schools comprised a talk or entertainment and opportunity for discussion; for example, at NHNS in 1921 there were social evenings with plays, songs and recitals; topics included care of children, war experiences, nursery schools in America and venereal disease. Like their children, mothers visited Roehampton for tea and entertainment. They helped out in the schools by cleaning rooms and working in the kitchens (NHNS, 1937). At the country holiday homes, they helped or visited on day trips, partly to see where their children were going but also to introduce them to the countryside; while benefiting from the holiday, school agendas were reinforced. Mothers also assisted staff at 'Pound Days', when donated goods, such as rice, vegetables and jam, were collected and weighed and cash collected; a farthing shoe fund was put in place to enable mothers to save gradually for shoes for their children.

Fathers contributed by window-cleaning, carpentry and gardening and by carrying out repairs and mending toys. Annual Smoking evenings were held for them, with discussions and entertainment; in 1921, thirty four men attended and were given tobacco, cigarettes and cigars supplied by Lily Reed's father, and entertained by conjuring tricks and songs. The political discussion was on trade unionism and led by a Vicar from Essex; details were not recorded but this provided an opportunity to shape the men's views.

At Notting Hill Reed set up the Feathers Club for parents of current and former pupils. By 1935 the club had two hundred and sixty members, providing a focus for activities, including discussion groups and sewing and knitting classes for mothers. Interest was shown in local families by the Duke of Windsor, then Prince of Wales, in the period of severe unemployment in the 1930s (Angus [1950]). According to this account, the Duke instigated the second Feathers' club for unemployed workmen; a hut was built close to the school to house; Angus noted that it 'seemed often to us like an extension of our own Nursery School' (ibid, p.5). Further research is needed to establish whether these activities for parents were typical of voluntary nurseries with a Froebelian approach.

## **5.7 Proclaiming gratitude**

In the schools' reports expressions of appreciation by parents were a recurrent trope; Reed reported that parents were 'more than grateful for what we are doing for their children, and especially the fathers at the front, who, when they come home on leave, always visit the Kindergarten and say they go away happier to think their little ones are so cared for' (1917, p.16). Expressions of appreciation in reports require cautious treatment, given their fund-raising function but some credence must be given to these statements. After early accounts of persuasion there were few reports of resistance, although encouragement to pay the very low fees was needed. Appreciation expressed by parents was tangible in the help they gave, even though the schools' efforts were small-scale, and, arguably, inadequate in the face of social realities. Mrs Leatherdale sent eight children to Notting Hill over twenty three years. Her children were all delicate; she wrote in 1933 'after their baby days there they have turned out to be quite strong. I am sure I could never thank Miss Reed and her staff enough for everything they have done for my children, and I am sure every other mother must think the same' (Leatherdale 1933, p.39); Mrs Leatherdale was listed as a donor in Annual Reports, for example of pillow-cases in 1937. Parents' gratitude notwithstanding, work in these schools must have been challenging; Angus described Notting Dale as a 'very unsalubrious neighbourhood' in the early days (Angus 1946, p.11).

## 5.8 Announcing success

Success of the schools was proclaimed in Annual Reports; Caroline Lawrence, Honorary Secretary to STNS, claimed that '[t]he whole neighbourhood has improved and is it not in great part due to the influence of our Nursery School?' "Little Hell", the popular name of one of the streets twenty one years ago, now deserves the name of "Little Heaven"" (STNS, 1930-31, p.2). A mother's response to the NHNS encapsulated the task Lawrence, and similar initiatives elsewhere, faced: "[w]e thought you was lafin' at us, a plaice [sic] like this for brats of the likes of us" (Anon 1945, p.14). The claim to success was commonly made of free kindergarten and nursery school work in Britain and America (Hardy 1912; Nawrotzki 2009; Grant c1940).

Very few records of pupil names have been located; consequently, assessing success of the schools by tracing individual life patterns has not been possible. Small indications can be gleaned from comments of head teachers of elementary schools to which the children progressed. As noted previously, many NHNS children went to Saunders Road Infants; the head teacher, Mrs Bury, was reported to be pleased to take them (NHNS, 1914). Girls from Saunders Road worked as volunteers at NHNS; this was reported to be keenly competitive and demanded 'a high standard of cleanliness, good behaviour and dependability' (NHNS, 1931, p.4). Groups of girls visited once week to hear about nursery school work; the focus was on conveying the 'essentials of healthy living' to these future mothers (ibid). Such comments closely aligned the work of the schools with contemporary fears surrounding the inadequacy of working class mothers. Experience in the schools led to employment for some girls at Saunders Road, some of whom were former NHNS pupils. One girl was employed as a maid in 1931; Lily Leatherdale was working there as an experienced probationer and reported to be 'a valuable helper' in 1936. Another former pupil was attending an elementary school two and a half days a week and the remaining half was spent helping in the nursery school, as a preliminary to training for hospital work. These examples suggest how encouragement of caring qualities may have shaped later aspirations, in line with appropriate conceptions of women's work as 'spiritual motherhood'; however, available employment opportunities were also likely to have been a factor.

Both schools recorded visitors from schools and colleges from the U.K. and overseas in Annual Reports. The impact that direct observation of practice could have was shown in 1932 when a letter from May Gutteridge (FEI, 1907-09), Principal of Melbourne Kindergarten Training College, was printed in the NHNS holiday report:

I do want you to know that the inspiration for our Holiday Home for Free Kindergarten children near Melbourne, Australia, is directly due to you and Miss Stokes and to the Holiday Homes for the Notting Hill Children and for the Somers Town Nursery School children...Like you, we have such quaint stories of the sayings and doings of the small people, to whom even in our new land, many experiences are quite strange (NHNS, 1932 [p.1])

Nursery school teachers' intimate knowledge of children and families was provided by close contact, facilitating supervision in and out of school, a benefit lost in the larger and anonymous elementary schools. Both schools established clubs to try to ensure contact was maintained after children left. At Notting Hill, these included Brownie and Guide packs, Cub and Scout troops and a library; at Somers Town, the Lawrence Guild was formed. Annual Reports noted that former pupils who joined these clubs engaged in fund-raising for the schools, through sales and entertainment as well as helping out on the summer holiday, thus denoting success for the civilising agenda.

## **6. Conclusion**

This chapter has shown how Froebelian pedagogy was implemented from 1900 to 1939 in a sample of infant and nursery schools in London. Education of young children remained stratified by class in this period. The schools discussed here were for working class children and, particularly in the case of the Raleigh, took pupils from very poor families. The chapter has supported evidence presented in Chapter Six that, from 1900, some Froebelians were finding their vocation in work in infant and nursery schools with very poor children and their families in often inauspicious surroundings. This represented a small but significant change from the nineteenth century when, whether by inclination or in response

to social mores or perception of their inability to manage large classes, the majority FEI students made their teaching careers in private schools. As shown in Chapter Six, this change was in line with view expressed by the NFU in the 1930s, that Froebelians *should* enter this arena, and criticism by the Board of Education that they were not doing so.

Developing nursery school discourse, and demands of Froebelians such as Hawtrey, that informal teaching should apply to children up to seven, led to debate on the structure of education for young children. Hawtrey deprecated the break at five years in an NSA conference speech in 1929, describing it as 'a very bad thing' (Nursery School Association, 1929) and repeated this view in her note in the 1933 Consultative Committee report (Board of Education, 1933). Ultimately, debate on teaching in infant schools contributed to greater understanding of the needs of younger children but conditions still hampered practice, as Roe reported to the Consultative Committee. In 1937, Helen Dedman, President of the NUWT, wrote about 'the freedom and movement, the happy playway of the modern infants' school' (Dedman 1937, p.285). The chapter has shown that Froebelians who did opt to work in state infant schools had a significant impact on developing new approaches to teaching which gained official approval and attracted many visitors from across the U.K. and from overseas. Shaw was an early exemplar of this approach but was clear that work accompanied the play. Roe finally settled on a child-centred, group-based approach after experimentation with individual work which drew on Montessori pedagogy. Project work in her schools drew on activity methods, particularly Deweyan handwork, with stress on how curriculum subjects were developed; however, she moved away from the view that project work met all curricula needs.

Evidence from the two nursery schools showed that children's mental development was addressed through play-based activities drawing on Froebelian practices, and health and morality remained a close focus. Literature from the schools echoed contemporary discourse which presented working class mothers as unable to nurture their children, thus, activities based on a model of social rescue were central to the routine. Rhetoric espoused possibilities for improvement rather than pessimism. This justified the schools' existence; the chapter has shown that nursery schools provided – and

conceptualised their role as – surveillance, of pupils, former pupils and parents. They stigmatised elements of working class culture (street life, mealtime procedures and language) and attempted to impose middle class practices on children and their families. As such, the nursery schools fulfilled the function of institutions for governance, through encouragement of self-regulation in the children (Foucault 1988); however, conversely, opponents of nursery schools argued that such provision might serve to undermine parental responsibility, and, thereby their own self-regulation.

Toward the end of the period, Gertrude Hume, lecturer at Furzedown Training College, London, and holder of the Froebel Certificate and Montessori Diploma, quoted two inspectors, heard discussing infant schools at an educational conference: ‘The first observed, a little dolefully: “The Infants’ department *used* to be the advanced of the three!” The second, still more sarcastically, retorted: “You mean some of them!”’ (Hume 1938, p.vii). This suggests that development of infant education followed a chequered path across the period. Dedman’s account of what she would do with the infant school suggested that in 1938 there was still much to be done in terms of staffing, accommodation, resources and daily activities: ‘[a]m I crying for the moon? No. For many of these conditions already exist in the best Nursery Schools...Let us make every effort to secure the best Nursery School conditions for all our “infants”, so that, soon, the terms Nursery School and Infant School shall be synonymous’ (Dedman 1938, p.225). The evidence supports Brown Smith’s claim (1937a) that Froebelian pedagogy continued to underpin practice in infant schools, although elements of eclecticism drawing on Montessori and Isaacs were implemented in the process of experimentation. Evidence has demonstrated changing interpretations of Froebelian pedagogy; Shaw used the Gifts, but freely, in her teaching in the 1890s and 1900s, while later teachers, Roe and Boyce, amongst others, dispensed with the material trappings in favour of broadly-based handwork characteristic of revisionist Froebelian pedagogy. Commentators, such as Catty, Ballard and Raymont, described the work of Roe and Boyce as Froebelian, or, in the case of Wellock, ‘neo-Froebelian’. Chapter Eight discusses developments in Froebelian pedagogy from 1900-1939 and shows how Froebelian pedagogy was represented in textbooks of the 1930s.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Articulations of Froebelian Revisionist Pedagogy**

#### **1900 to 1939**

##### **1. Introduction**

This thesis argues that Froebelians successfully negotiated the challenges which they faced from 1900 to 1939. One reason for this success was their enthusiasm to actively engage with new ideas and to respond to criticism of aspects of Froebelian pedagogy. Previous chapters have analysed how Froebelians sought to disseminate their pedagogy through engagement in policy-making and implementation and shown how Froebelian training developed at the Froebel Educational Institute. Chapter Seven demonstrated that Froebelian teachers implemented experimental practice grounded in revisionist Froebelian principles in infant and nursery schools from the 1890s to 1939. Chapter Eight examines how Froebelian engagement with insights from psychology and psychoanalysis fed into the revision of Froebelian pedagogy up to 1939. It analyses how revisionist pedagogy was articulated in articles and book reviews in *Child Life* and in books for teachers published by Froebelians from 1930-1939. This literature provided the means for disseminating Froebelian pedagogy to the widest audience, beyond those who were branch members or who attended training courses or summer schools. It thus reached those who did not specifically seek involvement in Froebelian activities or training. Although Froebelians discarded formalistic practices with Froebel's Gifts and Occupations it argues that the distinctiveness of Froebelian pedagogy was maintained during the process of revision.

The protean nature of Froebelian pedagogy was articulated by H.A.L. Fisher in his speech to the

Froebel Society in 1918, the year that the Education Act authorised LEAs to open nursery schools (Fisher 1918):

it is not enslaved by any one formal set of doctrines, or by the intellectual legacy of any one teacher. The Froebel Society is a society which lives to learn. It is always learning. It is alive to all the best movements and all the newest ideas in connexion with the teaching of very young children (Fisher 1918, p.66).

This chapter firstly sets out the intellectual context for developments in Froebelian pedagogy in this period; it shows how psychoanalytic concepts became embedded in Froebelian discourse and practice and analyses how changes in terminology used to describe the methodology of teaching reflected the practical implementation of Deweyan principles. It describes the move from teacher-led to child-initiated work and discusses an example of the resilience of projects set by teachers in the use of the story of Hiawatha. The chapter then shows how the Froebelian interest and engagement in experimental work fitted with the work of child study theorists, in particular, who were seeking to establish education as a science.

Finally, the chapter illustrates how revisionist pedagogy was articulated in Froebelian literature written for teachers in nursery, infant and junior schools and presents a brief analysis of reviews in *Child Life* to show how Froebelians responded to new literature. It concludes that by 1939 Froebelian pedagogy was characterised by eclecticism; insights from new disciplines had become embedded, however the essential tenets of that pedagogy remained in keeping with those articulated by Froebel.

## **2. The context for 20th century developments in Froebelian pedagogy**

At the Froebel Society conference in 1901 Graham Wallas, Chair of the London School Board's School Management Committee, made a strong critique of Froebel's pedagogy, arguing that it was grounded in a pre-Darwinian understanding of human development as a biologically-driven process, with



teachers required simply to 'follow Nature' (Wallas 1901, p.186). The robust responses of Alice Woods, Elsie Murray, and Esther Lawrence to Wallas' critique illustrated the ability of Froebelians to engage in critical debate on their pedagogy (Lawrence 1901; Murray 1901; Woods 1901). In the decades that followed, Woods et al, with other Froebelians, interpreted new ideas in line with their understanding of Froebel's pedagogy and sought to strip away arcane practices stemming from hagiographic approaches by some of Froebel's devotees (Brehony 2000a; Nawrotzki 2005; Read 2006a). Froebelians became active members of child study organisations and publicised new formulations of Froebelian pedagogy in lectures and publications (Findlay 1909; 1914; Findlay 1914; Murray 1914). They criticised Montessori's rigid prescriptions for her didactic apparatus, and drew on psychoanalytic insights into the importance of role and fantasy play to castigate her for rejecting imaginative play (Anon 1912; Murray 1913; Lawrence 1913b; Woods 1915). Dewey's influence permeated the pedagogy of Maria and Joseph John Findlay, Laura Plaisted and, later, Mabel Wellock (Plaisted 1913; Various Writers 1914; Wellock 1932), amongst many others. Although his impact may have been limited in British educational circles (Brehony 1997), Dewey, and followers such as William Heard Kilpatrick, was a central force in the ongoing re-conceptualisation of Froebelian pedagogy and the rejection of curriculum practices such as correlation (Brown Smith 1912). Correlation, discussed below, was a teacher-contrived method which focused on a particular topic to teach curriculum subjects, sometimes across the school year (Bloomer 1910). Eclecticism began to permeate Froebelian experimentation, as elements of Montessori and Dewey pedagogy were incorporated into practice, by J.J. Findlay in Manchester (Findlay 1913; Findlay and Steel 1914) and Frances Roe (1933) in London, amongst others. Froebelian experimentation with individual methods in infant schools was supported by HMIs such as Henrietta Brown Smith (1921). The revisionist impulse, already present in Britain in 1900, found justification and support in the work of other Americans, including G. Stanley Hall (Hall 1883), Earl Barnes and, later, Patty Smith Hill (1923), in Caroline Pratt's work at the City and Country School in New York (Pratt and Wright 1924), Harriet Johnson (1928), and in those developing Deweyan principles in child-centred schools, such as Harold Rugg and Ann Shumaker (1928) and at Teachers College, Columbia University by staff of the Lincoln School (Lincoln School 1927). As discussed previously, some were invited to lecture to Froebel Society audiences; however, Froebelians

were selective in their choice of new pedagogues, as demonstrated in their critique of Montessori. This suggests that active participation by Froebelians in child study organisations was based on enthusiasm to intellectually engage with ideas about young children's development emerging from this discipline, rather than pragmatic motivation to 'jump on the bandwagon' (Nawrotzki 2005, p. 97). In Montessori's case, an additional factor may have been the pressing economic threat she represented; her children's houses were in direct competition with kindergartens. Nevertheless, Froebelians did adopt some elements of her pedagogy, notably individual work, but in a much broader context of practice, as Roe's work demonstrated.

A new term, 'neo-Froebelian', describing Froebelian eclecticism, was used by Thomas Raymont in his report on FEI in 1929 (NFU, 1929). As noted previously, Philip Ballard used it to describe Wellock's approach at the Medburn, in London (Wellock 1932). The view that eclecticism sounded a death knell to Froebelian principles (Nawrotzki 2006) may have applied to rigid orthodoxy, but no single interpretation of Froebel had ever held sway. Caroline Bishop challenged the Froebel Society in 1883, resigning her post as Principal of the Tavistock Place Training Colleges to join Henriette Schrader Breyman's Berlin enterprise, the Pestalozzi-Froebel House, (Read 2003; Read 2004a), in itself a challenge to Baron Bertha von Marenholtz-Bülow's interpretation of Froebel (Marenholtz-Bülow [1883]).

### **3. Psychoanalysis and Froebelian pedagogy**

Just as Montessori pedagogy and psychological ideas emerging from child study provided both support and challenge to Froebelians as they revisited essential tenets, so did the development of Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Froebelians (e.g. Woods 1915) drew closely on Froebel's statements in *The Education of Man* on the significance of children's play and of imagination for mental development (Froebel 1887, first published 1826, para 30); psychoanalytic theory reinforced these views (Lowenfeld 1934; Griffiths 1935; Griffiths 1936; Griffiths 1938) and supported Froebelian criticism of Montessori's

rejection of fantasy play. Froebel's conceptions of the holistic nature of children's development and the inner drives which are expressed in children's activity, requiring teachers to observe children closely (Froebel 1898), were taken forward by Susan Isaacs, and discussed below. Papers were read on psychoanalytic theory and its practical application at Froebel Society Summer Schools, and articles and book reviews published in *Child Life*. The Society organised seminars on psychology and psychoanalysis for its members; in 1937 these were taken by medical doctor and psychologist Dr Frank, and in 1939 by Dr Emanuel Miller, an eminent psychologist. His edited book (Miller 1937) was favourably reviewed in *Child Life* in 1937. Froebel Society member Katharine Johnston, successor to Woods as Principal of Maria Grey, Gwen Chesters, later a Governor of the NFF, and Susan Isaacs, were notable in the enterprise to integrate new Freudian concepts into Froebelian pedagogy. Johnston and Isaacs sought to present psychoanalytic concepts in a form accessible to teachers and parents, evident in Johnston's paper '*A plain talk on psychoanalysis by a teacher*' (1923) and in Isaacs' *The Nursery Years* (1929) and her advice to parents, published under the pseudonym Ursula Wise in *Nursery World* (1948). Isaacs trained as an infant school teacher at Manchester under Grace Owen. From this training Isaacs developed 'deep interest in the writings of Froebel and Dewey' (Gardner 1969, p.37); her later training under J.J. Findlay is likely to have reinforced this. Isaacs interpreted their pedagogy in relation to contemporary teaching requirements, enabling teachers to understand the serious nature and deep significance of play (ibid). This was evident in her experimental work presented at two conferences with LCC teachers in 1935 (Anon 1935), and subsequent work with Boyce on the merits of unorganised play (Boyce 1935; Isaacs 1935). Like other Froebelians, Isaacs took an interest in British experimentation with Montessori methods; while lecturing at Darlington Training College she contributed (as Susie Fairhurst) to the college magazine on Montessori (Fairhurst 1914). At Malting House School, Isaacs provided Montessori's apparatus, with many other resources to meet children's interests; however, Isaacs later criticised Montessori's curtailment of children's use of the apparatus for purposes other than those she prescribed, thereby ignoring the 'direct interests of the child in the concrete processes in the world around him' in favour of implementing techniques intended to prepare children for formal curriculum subjects (Isaacs 1930, p.21).

Evelyn Lawrence, a psychologist and subsequently Director of the NFF, worked at Malting House with Isaacs in 1927 and described practice at the school in an account published after Isaacs' death (Lawrence 1949). Employing horticultural metaphors used by Froebel, after Pestalozzi, to describe how the educator 'may want his human plants to flower freely, and nature to take its course' (Lawrence, op.cit., p.2), Lawrence argued that choices needed to be made about how to achieve this. In line with Froebel's view of holistic development (Froebel 1887, first published 1826; Froebel 1898), Isaacs' solution was to provide for integrated social, emotional and intellectual development; however, her iteration of children's development was couched in language deriving from Freudian conceptions of the inner forces driving human behaviour, and the intensity of children's inner phantasy life. Isaacs' harnessed Freud's arguments for the dangers of repressing feelings, including those of aggression, and allowed pupils at Malting House freedom to work through their emotions; in this way play served as a cathartic experience and observation by teachers provided insights into their needs and interests (Isaacs 1930; Isaacs 1933). Isaacs wrote extensively for a wide audience, including parents and professionals working with children, to challenge conventional wisdom on children's upbringing and to gain understanding of children's nature (Isaacs 1929; Isaacs 1932; Isaacs 1948). She thus provided theoretical support for the experimentation which Roe, Boyce *et al* were implementing in their schools.

Described as one of four 'hard-core members of the first generation of professional educational psychologists', along with Cyril Burt, C.W. Valentine and Godfrey Thomson (Wooldridge 1994, p.2), Isaacs contributed a memorandum, written with Burt, to the 1933 Consultative Committee. This was printed as an appendix, and as underpinning evidence for a chapter, on children's emotional and mental development respectively. Isaacs' role as Research Assistant in the Psychological Laboratory at University College London, together with her psychoanalytic qualification, showed that Froebelians were entering wider professional spheres. Gwen Chesters articulated the new iteration of children's holistic development in lectures on junior school children at the Froebel Society Summer School in 1939: '[i]t is very necessary to realise the child as a whole...In behaviour because his physical, intellectual, emotional and social development are all interdependent' (Anon 1939a, p.136 ). Such events and articles were conduits for new understandings of play and child development to reach

teachers, with practical examples to demonstrate how they could be put into effect. However, not all were entirely successful; Chester's chapter on how children found emotional balance through play, in Miller's edited book, was described by the reviewer as a 'good, but somewhat vague picture' (Davies 1937).

#### **4. Revisionist terminology: representing children's interests and the linguistic 'turn' to science in educational discourse**

This section employs discourse analysis to chart changes in the terminology used by Froebelians from 1900 to 1939 to describe ways of organising the curriculum in infant and junior schools to take account of children's interests. Impetus had been given to teachers to incorporate children's interests in their teaching in *Circular 322* (Board of Education, 1893). Key terms, 'centre-point', 'correlation', 'projects' and 'centres of interest', recur in the Froebelian literature surveyed, some of which is analysed in Section 5 below. The analysis also showed how the term 'purpose' or 'purposeful' came to be used to describe pupils' activities and engagement in learning. These changes in terminology across the period reflect developments in Froebelian pedagogy and Froebelians' move from teacher-led work to activities directly derived from children's expressed interests which met their needs.

##### **4.1 The 'centre-point' and 'correlation': adult-led attempts to represent children's interests in teaching**

At the beginning of the period, teacher-led activities predominated at the Edgbaston Froebel College, in Birmingham, run by Caroline Bishop. The subjects, which usually ran for a month, were described by her colleagues Mabel Woodward and Emily Last as the 'centre-point' and focused on seasonal events and nature; examples included the Harvest, Christmas, snowdrop, goldfish and sparrow (Last 1936). Bishop had worked with Henriette Schrader-Breymann at the Pestalozzi-Froebel House in Berlin which followed similar practices (Brehony to Read, private communication). Mabel Bloomer trained at Kennington College, London, where she received inspirational teaching from her

kindergarten lecturer, Miss H.J. Martin. Bloomer employed the term 'correlation' in her manual for teachers, *A Year in the Infant School: A Fully Correlated Scheme of Work* (1910). Although the Consultative Committee referred to 'Froebel's dream of "correlation"' (Board of Education, 1933, p.145), the term derived from Herbart (Kliebard 1986); its use reflected attempts by Froebelians such as J.J. Findlay to connect German and Swiss educators Froebel, Herbart and Pestalozzi with the new pragmatism emanating from America as they sought to introduce Dewey to Britain (Hall 1996). Murray and Brown Smith noted how the Herbartian term was expressed by Froebelians as "unity", "connectedness" and "continuity" ([1919], p.62). They also reported the artificiality which correlation led some teachers to adopt, 'the elaborate programmes of work that drove them to extremes in finding "connections"' (ibid, p.139). Bloomer warned against making artificial connections between subjects in pursuit of correlation; this would be against the kindergarten spirit. Instead, she sought 'unity of thought', providing a flow across the year and through the seasons and weeks (Bloomer, op.cit., p.vii). As an example, in the spring, an object lesson on bulbs provided for phonetic and number work, a story about Narcissus, a song and game, blackboard reading and drawing, paper-cutting and folding, free arm drawing, clay modelling, brushwork and chalk drawing.

## **4.2 'Projects' and 'centres of interest': the move to child-initiated work**

Correlation was an approach to planning and teaching the curriculum which drew on Froebel's principle that the curriculum should embody unity but it was teacher-led. Over the period to 1939 Froebelians moved to introduce child-initiated work in their teaching and the term 'projects', deriving from John Dewey, and then 'centres of interest' supplanted 'correlation' in Froebelian literature. The rejection of correlation in favour of projects proposed by children was recorded in the Consultative Committee's report on *Infant and Nursery Schools*; it noted that '[t]he one essential for success is that the project shall arise spontaneously from the children's interests' (Board of Education, 1933, p.145).

Prominent in advocating the project method was Dewey's associate, William Heard Kilpatrick, whose textbook was widely cited in the literature surveyed below (Kilpatrick 1918). Froebelians published

books for teachers explaining how to implement the project work (Gull 1932; Catty 1933; Kenwick 1935; Boyce [1932]), as well as articles in *Child Life* (Howard 1930) some arising from Froebel Society Summer School discussions (Banks 1929; Hindley 1929). In 1929 the Froebel Society re-issued its pamphlet on the “Dewey” School, first edited by Murray in 1913 (Froebel Society, 1929). The re-issue included reports of all work carried out in Dewey’s Elementary School at Chicago University, not just that of younger children, reflecting the Society’s increasing focus on junior teaching. Janet Payne’s introduction stressed its value ‘just now, when purposeful centres of interest, under the name of “projects” were being introduced into ‘the most progressive schools’ (ibid, p.iii). .

Hilda Gull, a key advocate of the project method in Britain, taught at Cheltenham Ladies College and at Bingley Training College, worked as Inspectress of Schools for Liverpool Education Committee and inspected Practical Subjects for the NFU. Gull created a two year Froebel Certificate course in Liverpool (Gull 1932). Designed for elementary teachers, it was first offered in 1928 and again in 1933; it was reported that ‘many teachers’ had gained certificates and the training provided a conduit for new methods, including project work, to be introduced to junior and infant schools, although no numbers were given (Anon 1933e). Nearly five hundred visitors attended the exhibitions of student handwork; income funded a library of Froebelian books (ibid). Gull’s book was enthusiastically reviewed in *Child Life*: ‘the book is just what teachers have been asking to have. It is practical, it has knowledge of the teacher’s needs and difficulties’ (Anon 1932b, p.58). Caution was urged against wholesale introduction of the method and its appropriateness for the youngest children (ibid), but writers such as Gull, Boyce (Boyce 1938; Boyce 1939) and Kenwick (Kenwick 1935) focused on work with children over five. Gull made a firm distinction between correlation and projects, arguing that the former was based on the teacher’s initiative, ‘an attempt to show the interdependence of the various subjects of the curriculum’ (1932, p.32-33); although children might enjoy the activities ‘they did not undertake them to achieve a purpose which was essentially their own’ (ibid, p.34-35). Here lay the difference with the project, which arose ‘out of his own felt need and purpose’ (ibid, p.34). Gull’s critique of correlation echoed that made of orthodox Froebelian pedagogy (Murray 1903) : ‘[i]t is a pity that correlation fell into disrepute through the too literal interpretation of its disciples for it contains much that is sound and sane’ (ibid, p.33-34).

In Gull's view, some practice was 'positively ludicrous' and had the effect of destroying a child's interest in the subject.

Gull lectured on projects at the 1933 Froebel Society Summer School, stressing how 'reading, writing and number, far in advance of anything that a teacher would have dared to put in a syllabus for children of that age' (Anon 1933f, p.80-81), had arisen naturally in the carrying out of a project, echoing the point made by Raymont in his foreword, by Roe (Board of Education. Hadow Committee, 1933, committee papers) and Boyce (1935).

Towards the end of the period, from around 1929 when the term was used by Janet Payne (Froebel Society, 1929), 'centres of interest' began to be used to describe this approach to children's learning (Warr 1937; Hume 1938; Roe 1943); These writers discussed how teaching through this approach might involve 'individual' or 'group' work or a combination of both, but they, and others writing on project work, warned that teachers had to be prepared to work without a clear plan as the work was driven by the children (Slight 1933).

#### **4.3 Purpose and activity: meaning and motivation in children's learning**

A term reiterated by Froebelian writers in this period to express the need for teaching to have meaning for children, and thus to motivate them to learn, was 'purpose'. Froebel's view that children needed to see a reason for learning was vividly expressed in his story of *How Lina learnt to write and read* (Froebel 1898); Lina wanted to communicate with her absent father and reading and writing thereby took on meaning for her. Without such meaning, or purpose, learning was an adult-imposed task. In *Child Life* the reviewer of William MacDougall's *The Energies of Men* cited his 'stress on the eminently purposive nature of life' (Anon 1933, p.26). The discourse of 'purpose' linked back to Froebel through Dewey's methodology of the project; in her discussion of projects E.I. Newcomb cited Kilpatrick's use of the term to characterise them as 'a purposive act with the emphasis on the word purpose' (Newcomb 1934a, p.21). Further, 'the presence of a dominating purpose' was an essential factor (ibid). Raymont's foreword to Gull's book suggested that 'a child at the age of five or six...is at his best when



he is engaged upon a purposeful activity or “project” out of which an interest in the “Three ‘R’s” and in the beginnings of other “subjects” will emerge’ (Raymont, in Gull 1932, p.7-8). A review of handwork books in *Child Life* cited Harold Rugg and Ann Shumaker’s book (1928) as useful for ‘clearly justifying the introduction of purposeful work into schools’ (Anon 1933d, p.32). The term ‘activity’ was also reiterated frequently in conjunction with ‘purpose’; Froebelians such as Raymont, in his foreword to Gull’s book, and Brown Smith (Brown Smith 1928), used the term to make links with Froebel’s pedagogy, in which the principle of learning through activity and ‘doing’ was strongly articulated (Froebel 1887, first published 1826; Froebel 1898). The term signalled a clear break with nineteenth century infant teaching where children were merely passive recipients of adult teaching

At the 1933 Summer School, Brown Smith deprecated the claim of newness for methods grounded on old principles, arguing that ‘most of these were *old* principles with a new dress and a new name’ (Brown Smith, cited in Anon 1933b, p.78):

She took as an example the project as purpose and the centre of interest as the unity of experience; the love of activity as the beginning of a need for knowledge, and the vexed question of freedom in its relation to experience and law...All were found in Froebel’s *Education of Man* and all were restated by Professor Dewey, the most modern interpreter of Froebel (ibid)

Brown Smith’s point here was apt; the principle of unity which underpinned teacher-led correlation and its subsequent developments were Froebelian principles articulated in *The Education of Man* and in the papers which make up *Pedagogics of the Kindergarten*. They were developed and refined by Dewey, and by British Froebelians drawing on Dewey, to reflect new psychological knowledge and to meet the different educational context of the early twentieth century and the needs of teachers in state schools.

#### **4.4 Hiawatha: the resilience of teacher-led work**

Despite Froebelian advocacy of a teaching approach focusing on child-initiated projects, teacher-led work continued in infant and junior schools; books published on the theme of Hiawatha provide an

example of this. Holbrook's *Hiawatha Primer*, published in 1910 and aimed at younger readers, went through several reprints up to 1924 (Holbrook 1910). Proudfoot's *Hiawatha Industrial Reader*, first published in 1923, was reprinted, in 1927 and again in 1935 (Proudfoot 1923). Aimed at older children, this was issued in versions for pupil and teachers. Lee's reader, *The Children's Hiawatha*, was aimed at seven to nine year olds (Lee 1930); after first publication in 1930 it went through a number of reprints up to 1937. The staff of Seymour Park Infants' School, Stretford, Manchester, published a series of lessons on Hiawatha for children of six to eight to last throughout the school year (Seymour... 1910). The story provided opportunities for a range of activities; a similar topic, on the tribal life of the north American Indians, was described by Dewey (Froebel Society, 1929). Lee recommended annotated versions of Longfellow's poem and visual material, to create a Hiawatha frieze. The story offered 'scope for increased interest in other lessons. The literature, history, geography, drawing, and handwork lessons all provide opportunities for supplementing the matter of the reading lesson and for cultivating self-expression' (Lee, op.cit., p.6). The topic fitted into the race capitulation theory which Dewey and followers such as Maria Findlay and, later, Steiner, regarded as the basis for child development (Gould 1977). Boyce noted that the children who took part in her 'play' experiment at the Raleigh knew the story of Hiawatha, amongst other classic tales, however this was likely to have been introduced to them by Boyce or a colleague (1938). Despite the continuance of teacher-led projects such as *Hiawatha*, rhetoric of following the lead of the child was central to the discourse articulated by Howard, Gull, Boyce and others. (Howard 1930; Gull 1932; Boyce 1935; Boyce 1938; Boyce 1939)

#### **4.5 Froebelian 'experiments' in education: the language of science in educational discourse**

In this period 'experiments' in education were a part of the *zeitgeist* as educationists sought to gain scientific credibility and status for education (Selleck 1967). In the U.S., G. Stanley Hall and others pursued this through child study research while Montessori's stance was evident in the sub-title of her first book *The Montessori Method: Scientific Pedagogy as Applied to Child Education in "The Children's Houses"* (Montessori 1912). As noted in the Introduction, England was described as an

'educational laboratory' in the first issue of the *Times Educational Supplement* in 1910 (Cunningham 2000, p.218). The language signified a determination to adopt 'new' approaches to, and forms of, education (Boyd 1930; Boyd 1965; Selleck 1967); Montessori claimed her pedagogy was 'new'; the series of Conferences on New Ideals in Education had its origins in the first Montessori conference, held at East Runton in Norfolk in 1914. Froebelian engagement in the revision of their pedagogy reflected their response to this intellectual climate, and also their perception of the need to find ways of implementing Froebelian practice in state infant schools, which they had largely failed to do up to 1900. Experimentation was central to the practice of Froebelians in infant and nursery schools from the 1890s to 1939; as shown in Section 5 below, the term 'experiment' permeated descriptions of that practice. At the beginning of the period Mrs Shaw's work at Church Street and Haselrigge infant schools, discussed in Chapter Seven, entailed experimentation with rejecting the Gifts in favour of a wider range of construction materials, as well as those Occupations which demanded too much of young children's eyesight and manual dexterity. Frances Roe and E.R. Boyce repeatedly referred to the experimental nature of their work (Roe 1933; Boyce 1938). The term 'experiment' was also used more broadly in Froebelian accounts of practice in private and state schools. Woods (1920) described a wide range of experiments, including co-education, community government and work in nursery and infant schools.

Dewey argued that teachers had to experiment to find out what worked in their own context. Froebelians exemplified this principle; Joanna Hall suggests it underpinned J.J. Findlay introduction of Dewey's ideas to the U.K., but not his programmes of study (Hall 1996). Findlay and Miss K. Steel's investigations at the Fielden School at Manchester drew on Montessori and Dewey (Findlay and Steel 1914); Maria Findlay's teaching in Essex contributed to a different kind of experiment, at Joseph Fels' social venture at Mayland Mill (Various Writers 1914). As noted, Roe and Boyce described their infant school practice, which entailed introduction of individual work and group-based project work based on interests expressed by children, as experiments (Roe 1933; Boyce 1938; Roe 1943). Conferences on finding a bridge between play and work, involving Isaacs and London infant school teachers, was similarly characterised (Anon 1935). Isaacs' work at Malting House, Cambridge, from 1924 to 1927,

incorporated psychoanalytic perspectives and was, possibly, the best known of this experimentation (Isaacs 1930; Isaacs 1933); towards the end of the period, Boyce adopted a similar approach, directly acknowledging Isaacs' contribution to her thinking (Boyce 1938). These examples, together with the discussion of Roe's work in Chapter Seven, show the practical impact of experimental revisionist pedagogy.

## **5. Articulations of Froebelian pedagogy in textbooks for teachers, 1930-1939**

A selection of books published for teachers in nursery, infant and junior schools in the 1930s shows that Froebelian pedagogy articulated an experimental approach which retained distinctive Froebelian principles, drawing closely on Dewey's interpretation and on insights into children's cognitive and emotional development from psychology and psychoanalysis. Selleck's account of progressive educators and primary education provided a starting point for identifying key texts; however his focus is 'the best known and most widely read educational literature of the period' (1972, p.121) which emerged from colleges and universities. In this section the intention is to analyse how Froebelian pedagogy was articulated; few books discussed below are cited in Selleck's discussion or bibliography. The books, from the Froebel Archive for Childhood Studies, were originally in FEI's Library and were, thus, student textbooks; as such their importance lay in the potential to shape individual philosophies and practice.

### **5.1 Women writers on women's educational sphere**

The nine books discussed in the following sections are as follows:

#### Nursery school teaching

Lillian de Lissa *Life in the Nursery School*, 1939

Olive Wheeler and Irene Earl *Nursery School Education and the Reorganization of the Infant School*, 1939

#### Infant school teaching

M. J. Wellock *A Modern Infant School*, 1932

Jeanie Paterson Slight *Living with Our Children*, 1933

Nancy Catty *The Theory and Practice of Education*, 1934

Gertrude Hume *Teaching in the Infants' School*, 1938

E.R. Boyce *A Stores Project* ([1932]), *Play in the Infants' School* (1938) and *Infant School Activities* (1939)

#### Junior school teaching

Joyce Kenwick *Junior School Projects*, 1935

Edith Warr *The New Era in the Junior School*, 1937

Within each section the books are arranged chronologically, except in the case of Boyce, whose work spanned the decade.

The period from 1900 to 1939 was notable for a significant increase of publications by women on state-provided education of young children; Selleck (1972) reflects the gender blindness of much of the older historiography in failing to comment on this. Many of the writers had a Froebel qualification and were active in the Froebel organisations or as part of the Froebel movement. This showed widening professional interest amongst infant and junior school teachers and contributed to the professionalizing project discussed in this thesis. McMillan's stream of publications, which continued to 1930, initially described kindergarten education but later focused on open-air nursery schools. Owen published *Nursery School Education* in 1920. Laura Plaisted's *The Early Education of Children* was published in a second edition in 1924. Plaisted's book was grounded in Froebelian pedagogy but did not represent revisionist thinking. Given its date, and the work being carried out in schools, together with some twenty years of revisionist discussion, Plaisted's book conveyed an outdated reading of Froebel. This extended to photographs used in the book to illustrate practice and references to the report of the Consultative Committee Report of 1908. Books representing other strands of practice included Jesse MacKinder's *Individual Work in Infant Schools* (1923). Selleck refers briefly to her work at the Marlborough, suggesting she was 'the most successful' of those teachers who experimented with

materials for 'auto-education' (1972, p.43); Mackinder's book was publicised in America by Carleton Washburne (1926) in his account of methods representing new ways of teaching in English schools.

The authors of the books analysed below were Froebelians with formal and informal links with Froebel organisations. Nancy Catty was active in the Froebel Society and the NFU; Irene Earl, Jeanie P. Slight, Mabel [M.J.] Wellock and Gertrude Hume held the NFU Certificate; Wellock and Hume also held the Montessori Diploma. De Lissa and Wellock trained as Froebelians but later experimented with Montessori pedagogy.

## **5.2 Nursery, infant and junior school education: a unified Froebelian conception of teaching 2 to 11 year olds**

With the advent of nursery schools Froebelians advocated restructuring nursery and infant education to provide a unified approach to education of two to seven year olds (Hawtrey 1934). They deprecated the break at five which could result in the imposition of formal teaching in large classes in infant schools. Not all books published from 1930 to 1939 can be divided neatly into nursery and infant school textbooks, as some writers conflated the two institutions (Wheeler & Earl 1939), although the schools operated under different regulations. Some books focused on the junior school period (Kenwick 1935; Warr 1937); Warr noted that this important period had been relatively ignored. Despite the Froebel Society's adoption in 1917 of a title encompassing junior schools, the survey for selection showed that Froebelians continued to pay more attention, at least in print, to nursery and infant schools; however, *Contributions to Modern Education*, a series edited by Isaacs, included books covering issues pertinent to the junior school stage (Warr 1937; Boyce 1938).

### 5.3 Textbooks on nursery school teaching

#### Lillian de Lissa *Life in the Nursery School*, 1939

De Lissa's work has been discussed previously in this thesis. A key promoter of nursery schools, she moved away from early advocacy of Froebel to interest in Montessori. In this popular book, reprinted and revised numerous times, de Lissa cited a wide range of literature; despite the turn to Montessori her terminology reflected revisionist Froebelian pedagogy. De Lissa acknowledged Belle Rennie, founder of Gipsy Hill Training College, of which de Lissa was Principal, and an advocate of the Montessori inspired Dalton Plan. She also acknowledged Owen and Gwen Chesters, her colleagues in the Nursery School Association, and both also sometime members of the Froebel Society, and she referred readers to Phoebe Cusden's book for practical aspects of the nursery school (Cusden 1938). De Lissa cited Plato and Arnold Gesell as exemplars of how belief in the importance of growth and development translated into knowledge of the processes involved. Horticultural metaphors, for example 'unfolding his personality' (1939, p.xii), linked her with Froebel and other in the naturalist tradition; enforced transfer to school at five was 'as disastrous as the transplanting of a plant about to flower. If it does not kill the plant it makes for an impoverished florescence' (ibid, p.xiv). She cited Rousseau in arguing against early formal learning; this suggested a distancing from Montessori, who focused on development of concentration, skills preparatory for formal work and following rules in use of apparatus. De Lissa referred to possible psychological damage which could result and, elsewhere, to the dangers of 'psychic malnutrition' (ibid, p.xiii) or 'psychic malnourishment' (ibid, p.140), brought about by mishandling of the child's psychological growth. Psychoanalytic insights were apparent in acknowledging that these could lead to 'unhappiness and neurosis, sometimes to delinquency and crime' (ibid, p.xiii). Her chapter on play drew closely on Froebelian principles: 'play...is the serious business of life' (ibid, p.127), although Froebel was not cited. De Lissa's work showed knowledge of the work of McMillan (1930) and Montessori (1936) and she also cited Wilhelm Stern (1924), Florence Goodenough (1934), and Susan Isaacs (1929; 1930; 1933), amongst others. Her final chapter acknowledged the world-wide influence of Froebel, and the kindergarten as the root of the nursery

school. She also noted how campaigns for improved health and growth of interest and research in psychological development, allied to pedagogical research, also supported nursery education. De Lissa briefly discussed Montessori's role here, in just one paragraph, and made the point that she 'was in fact in pursuit of a scientific basis for the "self-activity" that lay at the heart of Froebel's teaching, which she re-named "auto-education"' (ibid, p.140).

**Olive Wheeler and Irene Earl *Nursery School Education and the Reorganization of the Infant School*, 1939**

Olive Wheeler's book, *Creative Education and the Future* (1936), was amongst contributions to 'spreading the good news' Selleck cites as emerging from universities and colleges; he included her in his list of 'most of the respectable and influential psychologists and theorists of this period' (1972, p.104). Wheeler held a DSc in psychology from Bedford College London and was an invited witness to the 1933 Consultative Committee. Before appointment as Professor of Education at University College Cardiff in 1925, she lectured, and became Dean of Education, at Manchester (Thomas 2004). Irene Earl held the NFU Certificate and was head of the College School, Cardiff. In this jointly-authored book neither author consistently provided the title of works which they cited and the book has no bibliography, thus identifying particular texts is not always possible. Wheeler's contribution set out the principles underpinning nursery schools. She noted the Froebel Society's and NFU's contribution to focusing attention on Froebel's pedagogy, resulting in kindergartens established by 'enlightened educators' and the training schemes associated with them (Wheeler & Earl 1939, p.14). Wheeler acknowledged Dewey's beneficial criticism which had addressed 'dangerous misunderstandings and misapplications of Froebel's views' (ibid). Terminology used in her chapter on the significance of play, for example 'phantasy play', shows the impact of psychoanalytic perspectives; here, references to Margaret Lowenfeld (1934) and Stern (unspecified work) were set alongside quotations from Froebel. Wheeler also cited Ruth Griffiths' work on phantasy play in emotional and intellectual development. Earl wrote principally on the practicalities of nursery school education; in her discussion of play and resources she also cited Lowenfeld and Dewey, amongst others, alongside Froebel, whom she quoted.



Earl referred to use of Montessori's apparatus but stressed the need for real experiences: 'actions required for dressing are not performed on frames alone' (1939, p.114); she argued that the apparatus suited children of two to three but were not sufficient when play became more complex.

This book represented discussion of the impact of nursery education on infant schools, a period which Froebel viewed as integrated. In quoting Froebel alongside citations to psychological and psychoanalytical literature and to Montessori, Wheeler and Earl showed how Froebelians were incorporating new perspectives into their pedagogy and publicising it to teachers in a readable and practice-based form.

## **5.4 Textbooks on infant school teaching**

### **M. J. Wellock *A Modern Infant School*, 1932**

M.J. [Mabel] Wellock, Head Mistress of Medburn School in London, held a First Class Higher Froebel Certificate and the Montessori Diploma. Philip Ballard's description of her work as 'neo-Froebelian' (Wellock, 1932, p.6) has been previously noted. Selleck did not discuss Wellock's work but Whitbread cited her, along with Boyce, as describing '[g]ood infant schools of the 1930s' (1972, p.93). Wellock's interest in new pedagogy permeated her book, written in response to requests to record her methods, and she was one of the New Education Fellowship's panel of international speakers. Wellock described her approach as dynamic, a 'tentative plan drawn up on very broad lines' in which timetables were 'arbitrary' (1932, p.13). Thus, the curriculum was not based on subjects but responded to children's needs and interests. Her key term, used repeatedly, was 'interests', with variations such as 'centres of interest'; another key term was 'activity' or 'activities'. Different projects led to a desire to learn subjects previously imposed on the child:

In a shop, he will want price lists and catalogues, posters, notices, advertisements, and labels to distinguish the goods. He will want to weigh and to measure, to know money values, and how to add in order to make out his bills (ibid, p.12)

Handwork was an essential part of project activity, entailing provision of many resources: clay, paint, wood, paper, calico and other waste materials. The role of the teacher was to stimulate and direct the children, and to ensure children would progress through engaging in their work at their highest level of ability. Ballard, Divisional Inspector for the LCC, claimed that the strongest force in Wellock's practice seemed to derive from Dewey, but he acknowledged other elements too, deriving from British practice and other, unspecified sources. A strong concern for children's social development emerged through encouragement of sharing and turn-taking, and respecting other children's activity. Although this was evident in practice in the nursery schools discussed in Chapter Seven, Wellock's phrasing echoed Montessori rhetoric: '[t]he child is free to use the materials in any way he wishes, providing his use of them is a legitimate one and he does not interfere or annoy other children' (ibid, p.17). However, her overall conception of 'legitimate' use differs from that of Montessori, who referred to the need to stop children from using the apparatus for anything other than its intended purpose. In Wellock's school, children were expected to transform the materials and to engage in group activity. Montessori activities were included, for example the silence games which helped children to learn to control their bodies. Wellock described the importance of physical training through teaching of hygiene habits, including cleanliness and handkerchief drill, and the development of independence, for example in taking of hats and coats and learning to fasten buttons and tie laces. There was no suggestion that Montessori buttoning and lacing frames were used to hasten this learning, Wellock merely commenting that these skills 'take some time to master' (ibid, p.20). The emphasis on cleanliness, social skills, table manners and language skills reflected the preponderance of children from poor families in Wellock's school. However the book showed that Eustace Percy's critique that 'romantic science' led child-centred educationists to focus on 'civilizing children rather than instructing them' (Percy, 1958, p.105, cited in Whitbread 1972, p.95) presented a crude dichotomy. Wellock, and other writers discussed here, did not neglect the acquisition of formal skills but fostered a desire to learn through providing purposeful activity.

**Jeanie Paterson Slight *Living with Our Children*, 1933**

Jeanie Paterson Slight trained at FEI (1907-09) and after gaining the Higher Certificate went on to work with J.J. Findlay in Manchester, at the Fielden school and the University. Like Owen and Maria Findlay, Slight went to the U.S. to study and gained a BSc at Columbia and a Diploma at Teacher's College in 1914. After her return to the U.K. she took the NFU Trainers' Diploma in 1918, lectured at Homerton College and Saffron Walden and became Inspector of Schools for Leeds Education Committee. Slight lectured for the Froebel Society and was an external examiner for the Teacher's Certificate at the University of Durham. Her Froebelian stance was reflected in the title of her book, an adaptation of a phrase used by Froebel in 1840 (Froebel 1898). Slight included Maria and J.J. Findlay in her acknowledgements; the latter wrote the foreword. J.J. Findlay described Slight as offering teachers a set of principles rather than a doctrinaire approach, so while drawing on Froebel, Montessori and Dewey, their work was used to illustrate practice rather than 'to be submissively imitated' (Findlay, in Slight 1933, p.8). Slight referred to Froebel's influence in changing the atmosphere in infant schools; she also paid testimony to the impact of Montessori in the move from class teaching to 'individual freedom and initiative' (1933, p.15). However, Slight's central purpose was to discuss the contribution of the project method to infant education, particularly how it fostered 'purposeful activity' (ibid, p.17). Slight cited the work of Dewey and Kilpatrick, amongst others, and addressed what she argued were misconceptions of project work. In particular, she described how project work with younger children (aged five) could be an individual activity; it did not have to take in all the curriculum subjects to have value. Slight referred to this as 'a return to the old correlation idea' (ibid, p.18). She argued that project work could not be formally planned through pre-arranged schedules as it developed out of unique social situations; instead, what was needed was flexibility, a 'readiness for contingencies' (ibid, p.20) and a responsiveness to the signals given by children in their play. Slight used descriptions of children's play to stress that focus needed to be kept not on the project itself but on the 'projectors'; the terminology employed by Slight, 'outward performance' and 'inner activity' (ibid, p.29), reflected Froebelian rhetoric on the development of the young child in *The*

*Education of Man* (Froebel 1887, first published 1826). Slight's description of resources showed that some Froebelians were still using the Gifts, but amongst other materials and for free play: 'the Froebelian Gifts III to VI tumbled all together into one big box and used on the floor' (Slight 1933, p.111).

### **Nancy Catty *The Theory and Practice of Education*, 1934**

Nancy Catty lectured in education at Goldsmiths College and the University of London. Involvement with Brown Smith, Roe and others through Froebel Society activity resulted in the collaborative book which she edited (Catty 1933). In 1934, Catty wrote on incentives to learning, early childhood experiences, and constructive work and the imagination. She acknowledged Isaacs' work in providing evidence-based suggestions for environments and work most likely to stimulate interest and learning; she drew on William McDougall's work, arguing that he had 'revolutionized the training of teachers by his insistence on the importance of...instincts and innate tendencies as he then called them [1908]' (1934, p.7). McDougall, lecturer at University College London and later Professor of Psychology at Harvard and Duke University, worked with Francis Galton and Charles Spearman; his work had eugenic implications (Alic 2001) on which Catty did not comment. She suggested that classifying children's play drive as 'instinct' or 'innate propensity' was less important than acknowledging that it was as 'natural and necessary' as food and drink; further, that free play opportunities were as necessary in the junior school as at earlier stages. Catty's discussion of extremes of early upbringing, from pampering to lack of love and affection, reflected familiarity with Alfred Adler's work. The interest of Froebelians in Adler's work was evident in Mary Luff's obituary notice in *Child Life* (1937). Luff, from the Tavistock Clinic, and Secretary of the Froebel Society's Bristol branch to 1928, discussed Adler's view of difficulties that can arise from what he identified as the self-assertiveness characteristic of children between two and four. Although Luff did not specifically link Adler to Froebelian pedagogy, Catty cited his work on how children's individual personalities shaped attitudes to environments. Catty's bibliography ran to eight pages, with occasional comments on particular merits of authors' work. Included were G. Stanley Hall's *Aspects of Child Life*, specifically 'what is now a classic account

of the value of constructive play - The story of the sand pile' (Catty, op.cit., p.243-4), and his chapter on dolls. Hall's story of a project initiated by children, and of what they learnt through their play, fitted with Froebelian revisionist pedagogy; his account of the value of play with dolls supported the Froebelian stance against Montessori's rejection of toys. Catty also cited Isaacs and Piaget, amongst many others. Finally, Catty recommended educational classics, including Froebel but not Montessori. Her work demonstrated a thorough grasp of literature from psychology and psychoanalysis and the ability to show its relevance for the particular interests of Froebelians. This was one of the few books by women included by Selleck in his selection of the 'best known and widely read educational literature of the period' emerging from colleges and universities (1972, p121).

### **Gertrude Hume *Teaching in the Infants' School*, 1938**

Gertrude Hume, lecturer in education at Furzedown Training College, London, had a history degree, the NFU Certificate and Montessori Diploma. Cyril Burt's foreword described her book as a demonstration of 'practical application of psychological principles to the education of children under eight' (Hume 1938, p.vii). Consequently, her reference to psychological literature was to be expected, as in her discussion of the development of children's drawing, where she cited Goodenough, Griffiths, Stern, Karl Bühler and James Sully, amongst others. Hume described the period from six to seven and a half as the transition age; the term was used by Froebelians for the class which linked the play-based kindergarten to the work-oriented class one of the upper primary stage. Hume's suggested reading was broad: Percy Nunn and Charlotte Bühler, on general issues, Amélie Hamaide's discussion of record-keeping in Decroly's school in Brussels (Hamaide 1925) and Cyril Burt and Ballard on intelligence-tests. Hume cited Dewey, Hilda Gull, Hamaide, Harold Rugg and Ann Schumaker and the Froebel Society pamphlets on projects in discussion of 'Creative and Constructive Activities'. Her chapter on activities for five to six year-olds cited Boyce (1933) Findlay and Steele's exploration of Montessori and other apparatus (1914) and books on teaching arithmetic, by the Froebelian Evelyn Kenwick (1937) and by Margaret Drummond (1922), whom Hume described as taking a psychological approach; as noted in Chapter Two, Kenwick regarded Drummond as Montessorian. Hume cited the

Consultative Committee's 1931 Report and her knowledge of its prescriptions is evident: '[o]ur curriculum [in the transition class] must still be thought of in terms of activity, as the pursuit of interests, not as a number of isolated subjects to be taught at stated times' (Hume 1938, p.64-5). Isaacs' critique of Montessori noted her focus on the 'scholastic subjects...the traditional subjects of the schoolroom' rather than the child's interests (1930, p.21). Roe and Florence Webb were acknowledged and tribute paid to the Froebel Society role in influencing change in infant schools through their lecture courses and certification system. Hume discussed Montessori's influence, but pointed out that her principles of freedom, self-activity and self-chosen tasks, were not new and had been emphasised by Froebel. What she saw as the basis for Montessori's success, in the face of misunderstanding of Froebel's ideas, was a new view of children's rights, leading to acceptance of freedom for individual development. Secondly, Montessori's writing was 'less obscure, less tinged with mysticism', and finally, Montessori's ideas had been applied in large infants' classes 'in some measure at least' (1938, p.9). Montessori condemned the partial incorporation of her methods in schools such as the Marlborough under Jessie Mackinder, thus would have disputed this as a demonstration of her principles. Hume concluded that Montessori apparatus had proved insufficient to meet the needs of young children; they rapidly completed the exercises and moved on to use apparatus for imaginative play, contrary to Montessori prescription. She suggested that 'there seems to be hardly a single elementary school class which might be called in all respects a "Montessori" class (ibid, p.12). Nevertheless, Hume stressed that Montessori's influence on teachers' attitudes to their pupils had been profound; individual differences were recognized and attention paid to them, rather than ignored, as in the past. This was less to do with Montessori principles than a failure of Froebelians to adequately convey their pedagogy to teachers in infant schools.

**E.R. Boyce *A Stores Project* ([1932]), *Play in the Infants' School* (1938) and *Infant School Activities* (1939)**

E.R. [Ethel Rosina] Boyce gained her NFU Certificate in 1930 through private study and the Trainer's Diploma in 1931. Her work as Roe's assistant teacher at the Marlborough in London has previously

been discussed; she left to take up the headship at the Raleigh in London's East End in 1933; from 1936 she was an Assistant Inspector for the Board of Education. Boyce described her pedagogy in a number of publications, some in *Child Life*, but others for a wider audience, in *New Era* and in books for teachers. She contributed to Catty's edited book (1933) and, like Roe, characterised her work as experimental. Boyce's 1932 pamphlet foregrounded this aspect of the project on Harrods store in London. The project was an experiment based on Dewey's theories, as set out in *The Child and the Curriculum*, but also drawing on Hamaide's account of Decroly. Decroly's view of the school as 'school for life, through life', his use of 'centres of interest' and the need for social adaptation (Hamaide 1925) are congruent with Froebelian and Deweyan pedagogy. The sample of children, the equipment and layout of the classroom and general conditions, relating to timetable and restrictions, were carefully described. The aims were both practical and theoretical. Boyce described records kept by children and by herself relating to activities, language acquisition and information collected. The scientific approach was further stressed in the description of the classroom as 'a laboratory rather than a Lecture-room' ([1932], p.40) and by inclusion of test results of sight reading, mental arithmetic and a writing exercise, carried out by an HMI. This was probably Miss M. Hill, then an HMI but formerly a Froebel Society Council member, whom Boyce cited in her acknowledgements, along with Catty and Brown Smith. Boyce also recorded her indebtedness to Roe for her 'constant help and guidance' ([1932], p.2).

In 1938 Boyce described her three year play-based educational experiment at the Raleigh as similar to the project method; again, she cited Decroly and Dewey, as inspiration, but with the addition of William Heard Kilpatrick. Significantly, showing how Froebelian pedagogy was embedding psychoanalytic insights, Boyce acknowledged in addition Susan Isaacs' 'encouragement and understanding' (Boyce, 1938, p.vii). The focus on following children's interests, freedom for experimentation and activity and stepping back from formal instruction on the part of the teacher, were characteristic of Isaacs' work at her Malting House School. Consequences similar to those Isaacs encountered were recorded; freedom to talk and move around led to swearing and aggressive behaviour at the outset (Boyce 1938) and concerns on the part of teachers, especially at 'depressing and destructive' criticism from those in

authority (1932, p,33). As at Malting House, these problems diminished as the children became used to the new regime: 'almost imperceptibly order, relief, and happiness came into the school...the children were the first to recover. Superficial difficulties worried the staff for some time' (ibid). Boyce noted that failure to teach all children to read was 'the weakest part of our experiment' (1938, p.183) - because they tried to do so, in response to expectation. Instead, she concluded they should have worked with junior schools to explain they would attempt to awaken interest in reading, rather than formally teach them, an approach in line with Froebel's own thinking. Boyce's experiment was an attempt to implement Isaacs' approach in a London infant school; it was articulated more extensively in *Infant School Activities* (1939); here Boyce cited an eclectic range of literature. Books on play, and problems expressed through play, reflected psychoanalytic perspectives from Isaacs and Lowenfeld, amongst others. She cited Mary Gutteridge's *Duration of Attention in Young Children*, possibly reflecting Montessori's view of the importance of developing concentration. Slight's work, discussed above, was amongst those listed on freedom in infants' schools (Slight 1933). Boyce noted continuing problems of space and large numbers of children as inhibiting widespread adoption of freer methods; however, in her view 'by far the greatest difficulty' was the balance to be struck between children's freedom and input from the teacher: 'how far to allow the teacher herself to use her influence, knowledge and adult-prestige' (1939, p.v).

Boyce acknowledged that the methods she was promoting were likely to raise concerns for teachers, both in terms of conception of professional role but also with practicalities of classroom management. She identified problems encountered in introducing freer methods: the disappointing first experiences when children may 'do nothing' as they were accustomed to 'dictated lessons' (1939, p.29) and the 'mess' engendered by free activity. Teacher disquiet was addressed throughout her book; discussing 'make believe', she suggested teachers were happy and perceived the class to be under control while children's activity was purposeful, 'actually making something' (ibid, p.34). When activity took on the appearance of make-believe teachers became apprehensive. Boyce referred her readers to the Consultative Committee's 1933 Report which validated make-believe, pointing out that such activity often preceded constructive work. This link between pretence and real-life was firmly embedded in



Froebelian rhetoric, with an early example given by Wilhelm Middendorff in his description of the children's free construction work in Froebel's kindergarten at Blankenburg (Middendorff, cited in Owen 1906). Boyce's discussion of children's wonder at what they meet in the natural world and their resulting questions suggested a close reading of Froebel's discussion of boyhood in *The Education of Man* (Froebel 1887, first published 1826), particularly resonant in her description of the 'why' and 'what' questions children ask and their excited observation of a dandelion or worm. Froebel (op.cit.) referred to a child's observation of a beetle; Boyce cited the beetle as an insect adults will simply walk past. Writing about activity in the nursery class, Boyce described the transformation of 'baby rooms' into 'delightful nurseries' (1939, p.223); her discussion reflected Montessori's influence, notably having resources at the child's level and 'a place for everything and everything in its place' (ibid, p225), but the thematic arrangement of Montessori's prepared environment was rejected and toys and apparatus were purely for experimentation and creativity. Boyce firmly rejected 'sense-training apparatus' in which she saw no merit; instead she argued that 'while the children are pushing objects into spaces, fitting one thing into another and making discoveries in boxes, drawers and holes, they are educating their senses in the same way as when they feel the water to see if it is cool enough to wash their doll's clothes' (ibid, p.227); testing the water temperature was a thermic exercise suggested by Montessori (1912). The list of resources for construction, investigation and make-believe included Froebelian occupations, with a specific reference to Froebel's Gifts (1939, p.231). However, in line with revisionist Froebelian pedagogy, Boyce stipulated that bricks should be taken from their individual boxes and stored together, and the boxes themselves used as bricks.

Boyce provided teachers with descriptions of experimental teaching methods. She gave them theoretical grounding to justify innovation, while identifying possible problems. Reviewing *Infant School Activities*, Roe noted its usefulness but warned that 'detailed instructions and directions given for the carrying out of dramatic work seem to me to be rather in contradiction to the spirit of freedom expressed in the earlier pages of the book' (Roe 1939, p.110). She suggested Boyce's advice would be 'more useful and more satisfactory' if she kept to topics familiar to children rather than 'a visit to a coalmine, rites in Japanese life and the story of Persephone' (ibid). This sharp criticism suggests

antipathy between the two, perhaps because Boyce had moved closer to Isaacs; as such, it may indicate challenge for voice and leadership as Froebelians positioned themselves in ongoing articulations of pedagogy.

## **5.5 Textbooks on junior school teaching**

### **Joyce Kenrick *Junior School Projects*, 1935**

Joyce Kenrick was tutor in education at Edge Hill Training College, Liverpool and sister of Evelyn Kenrick. Her book drew on articles published in *Child Life*, and journals for teachers, notably *The Schoolmaster* and *Teachers' World*, and referred to recommendations in the 1931 Consultative Committee primary school report (Board of Education, 1931) to validate the approach. Her key underpinning theory was derived from Dewey, with reference also to Decroly and to Gull. Kenrick cited the work of handwork specialist Henry Holman (1913) but, as Brown Smith pointed out in her foreword, projects did not necessarily lead to handwork. but to 'a play, pageant, exhibition, collection, a book, a magazine, and sometimes merely a desire for knowledge' (Kenrick 1935, p.ix). A keyword here was 'interest', which recurred in this literature; Kenrick used the term 'centres of interest' in discussing what constituted the 'dominant' interests of children. She identified cultural differences in what she suggested were the practical interests of Decroly's Belgian and Dewey's American child, instead arguing that English children had more imaginative, make-believe interests.

Brown Smith pointed out that the book was not intended to induce imitation by its readers; each project had a unique source – or 'chanciness' (ibid, p.x) – which arose from particular circumstances. She distinguished between projects and 'the neatly finished correlation of past days, which at its best was stamped by all the marks of the teacher and often prepared so that the whole of a term might be envisaged' (ibid). Bloomer's work, discussed previously, provided an example of this. Brown Smith's warning was apposite on both counts; despite some reference to theory, Kenrick's book described

projects carried out in her school. There was the possibility that teachers would simply use them as a template for their own practice.

### **Edith Warr *The New Era in the Junior School*, 1937**

Edith Warr, headmistress of High March School, Beaconsfield, contributed a chapter on learning geography through play and projects to Catty's 1933 edited book. The term, 'new era', linked her book, deliberately or otherwise, with the New Education Fellowship, through the title of its journal. Warr argued that while the nursery and infant school had benefited from 'great pioneers in education, such as Froebel and Montessori' (1937, p.1) the junior school had been left behind, a mere transitional stage between the infant period and adolescence. Transformation of methods had to address practical requirements to prepare children for the scholarship examinations. As with Boyce (1938; [1932]), Warr framed her attempt to introduce new methods as an experiment. In her foreword, Isaacs supported Warr's view that the junior school was 'more urgently in need of new life than any other' (Isaacs, in Warr op.cit., p.v); in addressing this need Warr drew on 'well-known experimental studies' (ibid) and offered her own contributions. Although her studies were 'not carried out with rigid scientific procedure or on a large enough scale to establish new truths', nevertheless they provided valuable additional material which supplemented 'more exact studies' (ibid). Key terms reiterated by Isaacs were 'child's interests', 'needs and interests' and 'child's natural interests'. In setting out the problem, Warr acknowledged criticism that teachers had not fully understood new methods, which led to time wasted on 'miserable little bits of handwork called 'expression' that have been tacked on to lessons' (ibid, p.2). She recorded an exchange with a parent which demonstrated the continuing misunderstanding of Froebelian pedagogy: "Do you teach Froebel here?" And while I was considering what this meant, he continued, "I mean, do they learn *all* the time, or do they do raffia and things like that"?' (ibid). Warr referred to use of the Dalton Plan by older juniors, to projects and to the Play Way, a scheme published by Henry Caldwell Cook in 1917; she argued that methods and 'new hoards of apparatus' simply became fossilized; what was needed was a change in the relationship between teacher and pupil so that learning became a happy, albeit still difficult, process. It entailed teachers getting to know

pupils individually and showing an interest in them. Warr stated this was not a new principle; it had been expounded by Pestalozzi and Froebel but never learnt. Warr's extensive bibliography included MacMunn, McDougall, Isaacs, Piaget, Catty, Burt, Ballard, Rugg and Shumaker and Fèrrière; the Consultative Committee's Primary School report was also cited. Rugg and Schumaker's book on child-centred schools (1928) and the collaborative book by Lincoln Elementary School Staff, Teachers College, on curriculum making (1927) were frequently cited in Froebelian literature in the 1930s; they were recommended by the Froebel Society in its submission to the 1931 Consultative Committee Report on courses of study suitable for children up to eleven (Froebel Society. Minutes XI, 24 January 1929). With Fèrrière's discussion of activity based curricula (1929) this showed engagement with international initiatives which were building on Deweyan pedagogy (Nawrotzki 2005; Nawrotzki 2006).

The literature analysed above shows how widely Froebelians were reading across disciplines (psychology and child study, psychoanalysis) and pedagogies (Dewey, Montessori, Decroly; Isaacs, as educator and psychoanalyst) and their ability to integrate their findings with essential tenets of Froebelian pedagogy.

## **6. Froebelian reviews of new literature in Child Life**

In the 1930s reviewers in *Child Life* commented on publications from the U.K. and overseas, principally from the U.S., with reviews sometimes grouped into subject categories, notably child study, psychology and handwork. It is not possible to know how this literature was read and interpreted by Froebelians but reviews provide some insight. Books were recommended for particular groups, for example junior teachers, and lists of books added to the Library were published. Not all reviews made reference to Froebel, an example being that of Stern's revised *Psychology of Early Childhood* (Stern 1924). As noted above, Stern's work was cited by Froebelians in their textbooks; de Lissa (1939) included eight references to Stern's work in her index. Stern, described as a 'neglected founder of developmental psychology' (Kreppner 1992), founded the concept of IQ; for Froebelians his conception of development as interaction between an active individual and environment, or activity/reactivity,

supported their argument for suitable, well-resourced schools for young children. In this revision, Stern's discussion of imagination and play drew on psychoanalysis and included new material on the creative potential of fairy tales, music and drawing, both copying and spontaneous, providing support for Froebelian critiques of Montessori.

In the special section on psychology and child study published in 1933, the reviewer related new literature to Froebelian principles; these were subjects 'teachers cannot afford to neglect'; they provided 'sound lines' for the progress of teaching (Anon 1933c, p.26). Knowledge of basic principles ensured teachers avoided 'prejudice against change or [were] easily led astray by the latest fad' (ibid). In line with Murray's 1914 text, the writer asserted that Froebel's intuitive insight' had been proved sound by findings of modern psychology and biology, citing in particular MacDougall's work on the shaping force of instinctive drives (ibid). His book, *The Energies of Men*, reviewed here, focused on the essentially goal-based nature of human activity and the need for teachers to make learning meaningful for the child. This chimed with the motif of 'purpose', a recurrent trope in the literature previously discussed. In the early phase, real experiments with resources were needed. Implicit here is a link with the Froebelian principle of active learning with materials offering opportunities for experimentation and creativity. Amongst other books, the reviewer included Alfred Adler's *Understanding Human Nature*. Froebelian interest in Adler's work was discussed in the discussion of Catty's 1934 text on infant school teaching. This new 'cheap' edition, demonstrated the success of Adler's book, which focused on how children understand their world and how best to create the conditions for a happy life for them. The reviewer noted that agreeing with the importance of Adler's view and putting it into effect were not the same, but that Froebelians had 'always insisted on the necessity of seeing each child as an individual, and urged that education should help him to see what service he must give to his community' (p.27). Thus Froebel was neatly associated with both Adler and the Deweyan construction of the purposes of education.

## 7. Conclusion

This chapter has presented evidence that Froebelian terminology and textbooks for teachers in nursery, infant and junior schools changed significantly from 1900 to 1939; in part, this was a response to criticisms that Froebel's pedagogy was outdated and Froebelian practice was not an adequate preparation for children in state schools (Wallas 1901). Further significant impetus to revision came from Froebelians' reading of literature from child study, psychology and psychoanalysis and from new pedagogic models; the chapter has shown how this was evident in the literature analysed above. The review of literature showed that for Froebelian teachers in nursery, infant and junior schools a focus on children's interests and on activity became *de rigueur*, with emphasis firmly placed on initiation by the child as the driving force, rather than adult planning, signified in the change in terminology from correlation to projects and centres of interest. Characteristic of the books analysed here was reference to literature covering psychological and psychoanalytical perspectives, alongside general discussion of the practical and socio-contextual issues of teaching and reference to Froebel and Froebelian occupations. Discussion of materials (blocks, sand, sewing materials, clay/plasticine, painting and drawing), language learnt during play, the need for a purpose for learning the three 'Rs', a and a view of education as reflecting children's lives, are characteristic of the nine books reviewed here. The issue of freedom had not been fully resolved, perhaps reflecting the difficulty for teachers in state infant schools to fully dispense with the timetable and a planned scheme of activities which would ensure the tool subjects were adequately covered before children progressed to more formal teaching. This aspect of child-centred education was to remain the subject of debate for decades, and arguably remains unresolved today. The use of apparatus for a specific purpose, albeit on a limited scale and only in addition to resources for imaginative play, also seemed to become accepted practice amongst Froebelians. However, sense-training apparatus was rejected as children could learn skills and gain sensory experiences from day to day activities in natural environments. The chapter has shown that psychological and psychoanalytic concepts featured repeatedly in *Child Life* during the 1930s; they

recurred in articles, book reviews, summer school reports, publisher advertisements and notices of events, both Froebelian and of other organisations. Some names recurred, notably Ruth Griffiths and Mary McTaggart; James Drever published a series of articles on psychology, looking at specific aspects such as psychoanalysis and intelligence-testing. This showed the ability of the Froebel Society to attract writers of significant status and from a variety of organisations to write for its journal.

Previous chapters have demonstrated that Froebelians engagement with new ideas was reflected in their membership of child study organisations and the NSA. This chapter has suggested awareness on the part of Froebelians of the need to adapt their practice to meet the needs of state infant schools, which were themselves changing to meet new socio-economic circumstances. In this context of change no pedagogy could afford to ignore new intellectual or practical developments, as the experience of Montessori in Britain demonstrated when early enthusiasm faded in face of her resistance to adapt to local conditions. The Conclusion reflects on these issues, on negative interpretations of Froebelian engagement with new ideas and on the implications for a distinctive Froebelian identity.

# Conclusion

## 1. Introduction

The period from 1900 to 1939 was exciting and challenging for those interested in articulating new theory, reforming educational practices in schools and developing new structures. For Froebelians, encouragement of freer practice in infant and junior schools by the Board of Education, through its *Suggestions for Teachers*, first published in 1905, through HMIs reports on schools, and through the Consultative Committee recommendations of 1908, 1931 and 1933, combined with legislative support for nursery schools to provide considerable opportunities to implement Froebelian practices. The thesis has presented evidence which has shown that these opportunities were grasped with enthusiasm. The challenges posed by the financial constraints of the period affected Froebelians and other educationists seeking to free schools from the nineteenth century legacy of rigid teaching, as well as the ability of central and local government to achieve commitments to establishing nursery schools.

For Froebelians, further challenges lay in criticism of the theoretical foundations of their pedagogy, and its practical exposition, and in competition for 'voice', particularly with regard to the education of children below compulsory school age. The thesis has shown how Froebelians contributed to the developing discourse of nursery education; indeed, their free kindergartens provided the model for practice and they continued to advocate for nursery schools up to 1939. Yet, in the 1930s, Froebel Society Minutes acknowledged that the Nursery School Association had achieved success in establishing itself as the 'voice' of nursery education. Again, evidence has shown that, far from being daunted, Froebelians used this challenge as opportunity to re-visit and publicise their essential pedagogical tenets and to emphasise their concerns for teaching children throughout the primary period. Froebelians in Britain had never focused solely on the kindergarten; in line with Froebel's conception of a unified approach to education, nineteenth century Froebelians established schools



comprising transition and upper classes as well as kindergartens, while they also lobbied for changes to infant school teaching.

The Conclusion addresses the research questions posed in the Introduction through discussion of themes. Firstly it discusses the re-visioning of Froebelian pedagogy from 1900 to 1939; it then considers how *being* Froebelian was inculcated. Next, the Conclusion reflects on the implications for Froebelian engagement in policy development of the overwhelmingly female composition of the Froebel movement. It then reviews Froebelian contributions to the professional development of teachers of young children, a key feature of the period from 1900 to 1939, and on their contributions to changing practice in infant and nursery schools. Coordination of activity amongst educational organisations was pursued from early in the period and the Conclusion considers the reasons behind the Froebel Society pursuit of closer association with some organisations and rejection of advances from others. The final section reflects on the research and the methodological choices which were made.

## **2. Re-visioning Froebelian pedagogy**

This section reviews the iterative process of pedagogical revision which took place across the period; it followed criticism from within and beyond the UK that Froebel's ideas were outdated and Froebelian practice was mired in formalistic routines which did not meet children's developmental needs. Extensive evidence has shown that in the years from 1900 to 1939 Froebelians regarded new theoretical conceptions of children's development as supportive of the essential tenets of their own pedagogy. That view underpinned the incorporation of those new conceptions into their pedagogy and their re-visioning of Froebel as a pioneer of modern psychology (Murray 1914). Despite the criticism of Froebel's pre-Darwinian views of child development, the continuing significance of his pedagogy in the 1890s in America was suggested in the claims of child study theorist G. Stanley Hall to be clothed in

the Froebelian mantle. Prior to Dewey's re-articulation of Froebelian pedagogy, Hall described Froebel as 'the morning star of the child-study movement' (Hall, 1911, cited in Selleck 1967, p.158); he claimed to speak as the voice of current-day Froebelian orthodoxy '[I] insist that I am a true disciple of Froebel, that my orthodoxy is the real doxy which, if Froebel could now come to New York, Chicago, Worcester, or even to Boston, he would approve' (ibid). With Earl Barnes and others in the U.S. child study movement, Hall has been characterised as launching an aggressive campaign to colonise the arena of kindergarten education (Brehony 2009a). It has not been within the remit of the thesis to investigate this view; however the campaign suggests a gendered assault on a female area of expertise, with male experts espousing scientific language to frame a new conception of professional knowledge. Brehony has described Hall's writings on the kindergarten as misogynistic (Brehony to Read, private communication). Froebelians in the U.K., however, undoubtedly benefited from the work of one US male writer in particular; they drew overwhelmingly on Dewey's pedagogy, which offered a re-articulation of Froebel which aligned his principles with insights from psychology. In this respect, this thesis has built on previous discussion of the impact of Dewey on education in the U.K. and shown how Froebelians imbibed his work and that of Kilpatrick. The outcome was a move from adult-initiated 'correlation' of topics and activities, whose artificiality mirrored the formulaic use of the Gifts and Occupations, to centres of interest and projects deriving from children. The consonance between American and UK criticisms of Froebel's pedagogy is evident in Anna Bryan's 1890 reference to 'mechanical and empty sequences...the letter without the spirit' (cited in Bennett 1937, p.450). Murray employed similar terminology in her criticism of formalistic practices which required kindergarten teachers to learn and then implement complex sequences of activities such as paper-folding (Murray 1903); whether she had read Bryan's paper has not been identified in the course of this research.

Graham Wallas was one British critic of Froebel who echoed the US child study theorists in criticising Froebel's pre-Darwinian view that the child's development required only a suitable environment for the unfolding of pre-existing instincts, laws and tendencies (Wallas 1940). Despite his criticism, Wallas set out by acknowledging Froebel's contribution, not only for 'having done so much to introduce happiness,

activity and love into our schools for young children...but especially...for having brought the science of education into relation with the science of life' (Wallas 1940, p.133).

The argument of the thesis that criticism was an opportunity masquerading as a challenge was evident in responses by British Froebelians to Wallas' criticism which conceded that there were problems; Murray's 1903 critique was pre-figured by Woods who complained of 'spurious Kindergartens, in which profession is made of Froebelianism, but which would be enough to make Froebel's hair stand on end could he see what is done in his name' (1901, p.197). Lawrence put it equally strongly: '[m]any so-called Kindergarten teachers are totally unacquainted with Froebelian pedagogy at first hand; the letter, and not the spirit, has been handed down to them, and they have distorted and perverted Froebel's meaning to such an extent that, were he suddenly to come amongst us, he would fail to recognize his own work' (1901, p.208). In her Presidential address to the Froebel Society in 1913, *The Watchword of Froebelianism*, Woods asked her audience what they thought the watchword was. Crisply dispensing with the expected response, 'harmonious development', she continued '[m]ost of us are sick to death of that phrase' (Woods 1913, p.137). She conceded that 'self-expression', 'living for our children' and 'freedom' were all part of her conception but what she has in mind was '*progress*' (ibid, original emphasis). Woods argued that this was the watchword that Froebel would have wanted to be known for, 'an ideal which, alas! Many of his followers have perverted' (ibid). Explicitly rejected were those who 'have turned the sayings and ideas of the master into a law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be altered' (ibid). Driving Woods was her particular interest in educational experiments with which she would wish her own Froebelian allegiance to be aligned (Woods 1920); Selleck, rather deprecatingly, described her book as 'of some importance' in delineating progressive experiments (1972, p.121). Woods, with Lawrence, Murray, Brown Smith and Raymont, were key proponents of a revisionist reading of Froebel which sent out the message that Froebelians were open to new ideas and enthusiastic to engage in dialogue with those representing the new disciplines. The thesis concludes that that this represented more than mere 'jumping on the bandwagon' (Nawrotzki 2006); unpublished records and published literature showed that child study theorists and psychoanalysts were invited to join the Froebel Society Council, encouraged to speak at annual meetings, in lecture

series, at summer schools and at branch meetings. Their work was published in *Child Life* and recommended in textbooks written by Froebelians and represented in the curriculum offered to trainee Froebel teachers at FEI.

A postscript to the debate initiated by Wallas, which supports the burden of argument presented here, was the comment made by his daughter, May Wallas, in her edited volume of his essays (Wallas 1940). She noted that since the 'fairly literal' interpretation of Froebel in 1901, 'Froebelians of the present time, *while still holding his fundamental principles*, are strongly influenced by modern psychology in their interpretation of his pedagogy' (ibid; emphasis added).

### **3. *Being Froebelian***

Development of theory and practice delineated the parameters of *being* Froebelian. The thesis has shown how the Froebel Society employed mechanisms to inculcate Froebelian identity amongst its members; summer schools played a very significant role as a prolonged immersive experience. Pedagogy was disseminated through *Child Life* and, more widely, through textbooks written by Froebelians, as demonstrated in the analysis of nine texts in Chapter Eight. Students in training at FEI, and, as Smart has shown at other Froebel training colleges (Smart 1982), developed a Froebelian identity through collegiate life and curriculum activities such as field trips and festivals. Froebel Society and college activities exemplified the varieties of living a Froebelian life. For some this would be in a variety of roles, as administrators in public roles or within organizations; for others the focus was on teaching, as lecturers in colleges or as teachers and headmistresses in private and state schools; others took on pioneering roles in opening and managing free kindergartens, living in the communities they served. Evidence from FEI showed that some students, albeit few in number in relation to the whole, worked in poor communities as volunteers, possibly reflecting responses to Lawrence's exhortations of duty. Some also went to work in infant schools; Froebelian views that children learn through play in activities deriving from their interests permeated the practice of Froebelian teachers in

state schools. However, evidence also suggested they were not untouched by contemporary discourse of racial decline; concerns to address children's health and morals continued in nursery and infant schools throughout the period. Attempts to teach parents were also explicit in nursery school agendas but less so in the evidence pertaining to infant schools. HMI and local government inspectors referred to the lack of support for children from parents in some communities but this aspect of the practice of Froebelian infant teachers was not pursued for this thesis.

Language employed by Froebelians suggested a religious conception of their leader, 'a great apostle'; of their pedagogy, a 'gospel'; and of their roles, as 'disciples', in some cases 'unrepentant', proclaiming their faith, on Froebel Pilgrimages, with qualities of 'missionary zeal'. This was a powerful and arguably attractive conception which supported Froebelians in advocating for their pedagogy and delineated the parameters for establishing who members of the group were. At the same time it crucially identified who was 'other' and thereby excluded. Findlay (1921) and, implicitly, Herbert Fisher (1918), argued that the Froebel movement was not a sect; the thesis concurs with this view, despite the element of protest identified in the thesis against government prescriptions and inspection regimes in the nineteenth century and inaction in implementing nursery schools up to 1939. Further, its practices were not confined to Froebelians; they became increasingly disseminated more broadly amongst teachers as they became integral to practices advocated by the Consultative Committee in 1908, 1931 and 1933 and, as Selleck (1968) notes with regard to Froebel's advocacy of play, by proponents of the 'New' education. Johnstone's (2004) account of Weberian sociology of religion suggests that the Froebelian position was more akin to a denomination, or an institutional sect, particularly in its social class identity and bureaucratic character.

#### **4. Engagement in policy development and implementation: gender and status**

Froebelians engaged in policy development and implementation in many ways from 1900 to 1939. A key area investigated in this thesis was whether Froebelians were impeded by gender as they pursued

their aims of disseminating their pedagogy and developing the professional status of teachers of young children. In Britain, kindergarten and infant school theory and practice, and the new field of nursery education, together comprising the education of the youngest children, was overwhelmingly a female area of expertise. It was framed as such by contemporary maternalist discourse (Allen 2005), and articulated by Froebelians and by those who took a more radical stance in gender politics, for example in the National Union of Women Teachers. Discussion of HMIs and local government inspectors also showed women claimed this area as their own, and it was acknowledged as such by male officials who designated roles. However, claiming expertise on the grounds of gender difference was not unproblematic; it may have been seen by Froebelians as a route into employment and attaining status but the re-structuring of infant and junior schools into single units in the 1920s and 30s resulted in the loss of posts for women head teachers of infant schools.

The Froebel Society lobbied key officials and MPs and attempted, with some success, to engage them as Council members and as lecturers in lecture series and speakers at annual meetings. The Board of Education Consultative Committee had minimal female representation throughout the period, despite investigating the education of young children in 1908, 1931 (primary schools) and 1933 (infant and nursery schools); further, the Office Committee convened in 1917 to consider nursery education, prior to the 1918 Education Act had no female HMI representation, a significant omission in a period of growing focus on use of experts. However Froebelians were represented by Consultative Committee members and contributed evidence as invited witnesses and as correspondents; the Froebel Society also submitted a memorandum to the Office Committee. Their evidence fed into the conclusions of the three reports on education of young children published in the period; Froebelian training was specifically cited as appropriate for teachers of young children in the 1908 report.

Nursery provision was a frequent subject of debate within the LCC throughout the period to 1939; minutes suggest this was heated at times, notably in the discussions involving Cyril Jackson following the advocacy of nursery schools by the 1908 Consultative Committee. The stance of the Committee's Froebel-inflected report was largely supported by the LCC but with Jackson dissenting; later evidence

showed meetings with representatives of the NSA included the Froebelian Freda Hawtrey. Evidence showed that the LCC shared the Froebelian preference for nursery schools rather than classes, articulated in particular by McMillan, but policy was driven by financial considerations.

As the Women Inspectorate developed, following Morant's reforms, women HMIs were directed into work in infant and nursery schools, as well as other 'female' areas of expertise, such as needlework. In supporting experimental practice, such as that of Froebelians Mrs Shaw, Frances Roe and E.R. Boyce, they began to change critical perceptions of nineteenth century male HMIs (Lyschinska 1886; Bathurst 1905). Early in the period, Froebelian HMIs, including Kitty Bathurst, powerfully delineated the problems faced by children under five in elementary schools (Board of Education, 1905). In the Consultative Committee which subsequently took up the issues they raised, no evidence emerged that gendered power relations inhibited Froebelian women in their engagement with the Committee, as members or as witnesses. However, restrictions placed on female HMIs, for example the requirement to filter their reports through male superiors, did present an opportunity for gendered constraint but evidence suggested that female views were presented without censure, even in the extreme case of Bathurst, albeit with annotations which challenged her data and argument.

As government prescriptions for infant teachers increasingly encouraged freer practice, from Circular 322 in 1893 and continuing in the series of *Suggestions for Teachers* (Board of Education, 1905), Froebelian and government aims were in alignment. However, the government's failure to implement the recommendations of the 1908 report reflects the lack of status of young children; in this period demands from the labour movement for improved access to secondary education in higher grade elementary schools for working class children were a higher priority and by 1939 there were just one hundred and eleven nursery schools in England and Wales, fifty-five voluntary and sixty-three funded by LEAs (NSA, 1939)

In the prolonged debate surrounding the qualities and training required for teachers in nursery schools, gendered notions of the role served as an inhibiting factor in the development of its professional status.

Given Froebel's maternalist views (Froebel 1887, first published 1826; Froebel 1891) it is not surprising that Froebelians contributed to the maternalist discourse regarding teachers of young children (Allen 2005); however, the thesis has shown that in Britain some Froebelians undermined their own colleagues' arguments for high professional status by stressing motherly qualities at the expense of the need for certificated teachers.

Froebel Society minutes showed that the Society's policy engagement focused on education of children and did not engage in wider issues of interest to women teachers, or to women more generally, as in the refusal to take part in suffrage demonstrations or to support calls for equal pay. This is perhaps less surprising in the case of suffrage; evidence was not clear on how far Montefiore directed the Society in this respect. In 1908 the Minutes simply recorded a decision not to participate in the large suffrage demonstration to be held in June. In 1912, they recorded that he pre-empted discussion of the suffrage issue altogether. However, the Society's refusal to support a call for equal pay in 1929, as it could not give an opinion on the subject, set the Society apart from the NUWT, which had written to request its support, and many other women's organisations such as the Women's Industrial Council. This was in the context of a widening in the pay differential in 1925, following reduction in the women's increment (Partington 1976), and the lowering of the voting age for women to twenty-one in 1928. In this respect, the Society's political conservatism was in stark contrast to its engagement in new intellectual ideas and its pedagogical revision.

## **5. Professionalisation**

During this period Froebelians supported professional development for infant, and, later, nursery school teachers, however, gaining acknowledgement of their status proved hard to achieve. Gendered power politics drew on maternalist discourse to support the designation of infant school teaching as of lower status, hence, providing justification for the continuing employment of unqualified Supplementary or Article 68 teachers in infant classes after abolition in those for older children (Partington, op.cit.). The government's stance may have been driven by financial imperatives but it received huge support



from male-dominated teacher unions, in particular the National Association of Schoolmasters. The Consultative Committee's advocacy of the employment of untrained 'helpers' in nursery schools in its 1933 report was also received with caution, as it threatened to undermine the status of nursery school teachers (ibid).

Considerable evidence emerged of the Froebel Society's attempts to disseminate Froebelian pedagogy to elementary school teachers through classes, conferences, summer schools and branch activity, thereby supporting their professional development. Headmistresses such as Shaw and Roe offered models of Froebelian practice and opportunities for staff to develop expertise through study, with time off from teaching to take Froebel examinations. However, few students from FEI entered state infant schools during the period, despite the re-structuring of its core training to give students greater flexibility and the receipt of grants from the Board of Education. FEI also offered new courses to support professional development for nursery school teachers and for child welfare work but evidence suggested these were not successful.

At FEI, the focus of the curriculum remained on the core Froebelian subjects of handwork and nature study and combined theory with practice, both in examinations and in the teaching of subjects. However, there was a clear shift away from formal work with Froebel's Gifts and Occupations to work with a wider range of resources, particularly as part of project work. Some evidence showed that the curriculum reflected disciplinary developments in psychology and psychoanalysis but insufficient records survive to gain a full picture of this over the period, or how far concepts from Montessori were incorporated. Staff lists show increasing employment of graduate lecturers, and a limited number held the Montessori Diploma; at FEI subject knowledge gradually took precedence over Froebel qualifications as the period progressed. From 1900 to 1939 FEI students continued to represent an élite and to take their professional training back into private schools.

## **6. Froebelian contributions to changing practice**

The process of re-visioning Froebelian principles accompanied changes in practice, as demonstrated by Shaw in her infant schools in Hackney and Clapham, and in the infant school where Roe developed her experimental approaches. The introduction of freer methods in state schools required support from HMIs, implementing government policy and the thesis has concluded that this was forthcoming in this period; Roe reported a change in HMI stance, with encouragement for her experimentation (Roe 1933); this was evident too in reports of LCC inspectors. Roe's witness evidence to the 1933 Consultative Committee recorded factors which hampered her work. This showed that the efforts of teachers remained circumscribed by inappropriate accommodation, with gallery classroom surviving, with large class sizes, right through the period. Despite lobbying from Froebelians and the NSA the costs of nursery schools combined with maternalist discourse, which located the home as the proper place for young children, to inhibit progress up to 1939. Financial arguments were cited by those advocating nursery classes as an alternative but Froebelians, amongst whom McMillan is included here, argued for nursery schools. A model for practice was provided by Froebelians at Notting Hill and Somers Town Nursery Schools and by McMillan in her large open-air venture at Deptford. The social aspect of free kindergarten and nursery school work, which targeted parents as well as children, began to become evident in discussion of infant schools as a new conception of the role of these schools developed. The thesis has not pursued this aspect of parental engagement and it remains an area for further research.

## **7. Relationships**

What has emerged of central significance is the importance Froebelians placed on developing relationships in pursuit of their agendas, with government officials and MPs, with organisations, with teachers in elementary schools, and within the Froebel movement itself. Here, relationships were fostered by branch activities and summer schools and via the pages of *Child Life*. At FEI, students

clubs and curriculum activities (gardening, festivals, field trips for nature study and geography) fostered a common identity and relationships were continued through sharing of life stories in *The Link*.

Evidence has shown how some organisational relationships were pursued by individuals within the Froebel Society acting on their own initiative but were not supported by Council. Despite on-going financial crises which led to debates about viability, in 1898 and again in 1933, Council decided to reject proposals to wind up the Society and to continue, on the grounds of its particular contribution to education. That did not preclude the Society's engagement in initiatives such as jointly arranged lecture series and branches, sharing libraries and developing the agency of teachers, for example by taking over that of the NSA. The thesis concludes that despite points of strain in relationships between particular individuals in the Froebel Society and the NSA, and concerns within these organisations, and the Child Study Society, regarding loss of identity, autonomy and competition for resources, Froebelians benefited from joint activities in material ways. In particular, they contributed to the development of Froebelians' professional knowledge and expertise. Correspondence amongst NSA members in 1925 showed that the Froebel Society was regarded by the NSA as a powerful organisation (NSA, 1925). In the 1930s, the Froebel Society acknowledged that the NSA had gained the 'voice' with regard to nursery schools (Froebel Society. Minutes XI); however, the NSA sought and gained the assistance of the Froebel Society with its registry of teachers in 1935, which the Society took over. Furthermore, discussion in Council in 1939 showed that at least some members regarded the Society as in a more secure position than the relatively young and insecure NSA, and in a position to help it if required.

## **8. Reflections on research and methodologies**

### **8.1 Research**

The discussion of relationships leads to the question of how this research could be taken forward. Although transatlantic crossings have been noted, for example by Owen, Findlay and Slight in the first

two decades of the period for study and by others who went to find out about child study, this thesis has not attempted to build on previous research of parallels and connections between the British and US movements (Nawrotzki 2005; Nawrotzki 2007; Nawrotzki 2009). The focus on the British Froebel movement has obviated detailed discussion of evidence showing possible bases for relationships between American and British Froebelian teachers, for example visits by American teachers on a Froebel pilgrimage in 1911 and in 1929; further research is needed to investigate how significant these were, and whether they remained transitory or developed into on-going relationships which led to shared practice.

A further lacuna is discussion of the web of relationships with the Child Study Society; research found evidence of substantial on-going Froebelian involvement in child study activity, and not solely through joint branch activity. Limitation of space required a choice for detailed focus on organisational relationships; the NSA was selected as having interests more closely aligned with those of Froebelians. Research of relationships with the CSS will be taken forward outside the confines of the thesis.

## **8.2 Methodological choices**

### **8.2.1 Personal documents**

Few personal documents were found in the organisational archives and the decision was taken not to seek for personal papers of key figures such as Brown Smith and Murray. McCulloch (2004) discusses the illuminating synergies between documents emerging from private and public domains; however, the focus was on how individuals operated within organisational contexts, although some records did show personal agency. The thesis has shown how Froebelian agency shaped lives; Brown Smith is a case in point. Whether private papers would substantially contribute to knowledge of Brown Smith's activities and motivation is open to question.

### **8.2.2 Networking**

Evidence of Froebelian career paths has highlighted how pedagogy was disseminated through work in different educational sectors – as school teachers and headmistresses, as college lecturers and Principals, as Inspectors, committee members and witnesses, and through different organisational affiliations. Froebelians came together for their own activities and networking contributed to the cultural reproduction of practices in what was becoming a more disparate movement; at the same time cross-organisation networking also fed into developing theory and practice. In considering the use of network theory, two articles were particularly illuminating. Cunningham's (2001) discussion focuses on how an approach which takes account of networks and structures can contribute to a prosopography of progressivism. The concept of a group biography of the Froebel movement for the period from 1900 to 1939 has been taken forward here, but there is scope for much further development which addresses the networking approach suggested by Ball and Exley (2010). They argue that networks function as 'conduits for interests and influence and for the making of political careers' (Ball and Exley 2010, p.166). The thesis has investigated some Froebelian lives from this perspective, notably that of Henrietta Brown Smith; a richer picture could emerge from close focus on others who have been omitted from published accounts. Although employing a visual figure to display connections between the organisations they discuss, Ball and Exley reject the quantitative approach which has marked recent work, arguing that such graphical representations only illuminate structures; the relationships implicit in the networks remain hidden. As this thesis concludes, the relationships which underpin networks are complex and sometimes opaque. In this respect, although networking theory was rejected for this thesis, it offers a useful methodology for further research investigating the diverse strands of the Froebel movement and the complex interconnections which helped it to successfully negotiate the challenges of the period.

## **9. Concluding comments**

This thesis has shown how the Froebel movement, whose pedagogy pre-dated scientific developments which expanded understanding of children's development, was able to revisit and re-vision its essential tenets to enable it remain a significant force in the education of young children from nursery to junior school age in Britain up to 1939. Examples of practice have demonstrated that Froebelians were implementing the core Froebelian principle of child-centred, play-based learning in state schools; further, that these principles were central to government recommendations in the Consultative Committee reports of 1931 and 1933. This represented a significant advance on the situation existing in 1900. Froebelians achieved this success by integrating new psychological and psychoanalytic insights with their core pedagogical principles. The challenges which Froebelians faced in this period were significant and wide-ranging. Overcoming them required imagination and skill in devising effective strategies, and determination to persevere in the face of setbacks and disappointments. The women who made up the overwhelming majority in the movement had complex issues of power relations to negotiate, both with male officials in the Board of Education and with those in other organisations pursuing cognate interests. No evidence emerged that they shirked from these demands. Difficult choices had to be made by the Froebel Society about amalgamation with other organisations in this period of financial stringency. The decision to continue independently represented Froebelians' belief in the power of their message and unwillingness to dispense with their distinctive identity, which was actively promoted in this period in many ways. Indeed, by 1939 the Froebel movement had a wider membership base, beyond private schools, which represented teachers in state nursery, infant and junior schools and representatives of the new disciplines, and the Froebel organisations at the core of the movement had merged, creating a sounder structure which has enabled it to continue as a promoter of Froebelian pedagogy up to the present time.

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